

SHRINE OF BERTHA.

A NOVEL.



THE
SHRINE OF BERTHA.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MISS ROBINSON. 18

VOL. II.

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THE
SHRINE OF BERTHA.

LETTER I.

HENRY COURTNEY,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

London, Sept. 179--.

HEAR my misfortunes, and tell me if there is such another wretch as myself "crawling 'twixt heaven and earth?" Advise me, for I am completely miserable.

Four days past I left a letter at the Hermitage; oh! that it had sunk to the bottom of the Thames before I had beheld it. Yesterday morning I went, hoping and fearing, to receive the fiat of my destiny.

On entering, I found a note, directed to me, cautiously placed beneath the straw mattress; judge of my transport when I read the following lines.

‘Yes, beloved, amiable Henry, your
‘Ophelia has confidence in the honour
‘of her Courtney; her hand, her heart,
‘her fortune await your acceptance;
‘be ready this night at twelve o’clock,
‘at the outside of the Park paling, behind
‘the favorite Hermitage, sacred
‘to love and constancy! Be secret, be
‘faithful, and receive the trembling
‘but ingenuous

‘OPHELIA.’

I read this enchanting testimony of my Sophia’s affection, at least ten thousand times, I snatched it to my palpitating breast, and, breathless with delight, returned to the house to make
the

the preparations for my eternal happiness.

When I entered, the family were arranging themselves for dinner, my Sophia was placed next to Colville, to whom she was uncommonly attentive, I was enchanted at her precaution, and beheld with patience, and even delight, the disdainful glances she frequently bestowed on me.

That horrible Witch of Endor, Miss Winterton, next to whom it was my lot to be placed, was more frightful and more assiduous than ever, I will endeavour to describe her, as she appeared at that moment.

She had adorned her Hecatonean figure, with all the paraphernalia of pinchbeck, mock pearl, tinsel, rusty steel, and dirty feathers! not to mention, the beautiful mocho back and

the immortal onyx, which were carefully displayed, beneath a saffron-tinted gauze apron.

Disgusted with the attentions of this vestal, Sychorax, I retired to my chamber, as soon as the formalities of the table would permit, to ruminate on my approaching happiness, and to make preparations for my journey.

I remained in this delightful seclusion the whole evening, and after having given proper directions to my old and trusty servant, who was to attend me, I penned a short note to Sir Hervey Wentworth, alledging the sudden indisposition of Mrs. Percival as the cause of my abrupt departure. My impatience became insupportable as the midnight hour approached.

At twelve o'clock my servant came to my door, and, gently tapping with
his

his whip, informed me that every thing was ready.

Oh! Percival, how my heart bounded at the intelligence! I darted with the swiftness of lightning through the hall, and in an instant gained the Park paling: I had scarcely reached the appointed place when my ears were blessed with the sound of my Ophelia's footsteps; fearful to encourage the delusions of my fond enraptured imagination, I listened 'till they approached within a few paces of the spot, where I was waiting in all the torments of hope and fear, before I had resolution to utter a syllable. She was veiled; I took her hand—it trembled exceedingly.

I thought this no time for eloquence; she tripped into the chaise, and the postillions having before received their

B 3 instructions,

instructions, flew towards the altar of Hymen, upon the wings of love.

We had not proceeded three miles when my servant rode up to the carriage, with my purse, which I had left on my dressing table, crying, "Stop, stop, Sir, your money!" The appearance of a man on horseback, with this salutation, (though I instantly recognized his voice and figure) caused such trepidation in the breast of my trembling companion, that for the first time during our expedition, she addressed me: Heavens! Percival, what were my sensations, when I heard her say, "Oh! my dear Courtney, how shall I preserve my mocho backed watch and my onyx seal?"

"Fiends and furies, your what?" exclaimed I, instantly attempting to escape. But in vain did I hope to steal from the seducing sycorax, for she struck

struck her claws into the skirt of my coat, and held me fast. "Will you leave me, Courtney?" said she.— "That I will most assuredly," answered I. "What, in this dismal forest?" I could only groan forth, "Oh beloved, injured Ophelia. But I am deceived, I am trepanned."—"Nay," answered she, "I think 'tis I that am trepanned! was it for this, ungrateful youth, that I overstepped the bounds of virgin modesty, and condescended to answer your deluding epistles? Cruel, inhuman Courtney!"

Notwithstanding her ridiculous credulity, the respect due to the sex made me attempt a serious expostulation. I now saw the full magnitude of my disappointment, and gravely addressed her.

"Madam," said I, as I stood upon the step of the carriage, she still holding

ing the skirt of my coat, "your own good sense must tell you, that there has been some awkward misunderstanding, in this affair, for which I am ready to make you any apology; I will attend you to whatever place of safety you require, and to-morrow morning I will, by a proper explanation, counteract the ridicule to which this night's adventure might expose you."

"Impertinent coxcomb!" was the answer I received for my obliging offer: again she threatened, again she soothed me, till heartily tired of this controversy, I made a desperate effort to regain my liberty, by slipping my arms out of my sleeves, and jumping off the step; having done so, I instantly shut the chaise door, and after ordering my servant to protect the lady, and conduct her to whatever place she chose to name, I wrapped myself in his great coat, mounted his horse,

horse, and with incredible swiftness hastened towards London ; in my road thither, while at breakfast, I wrote a short note to Colville, informing him of my unhappy mistake, and entreating him to elucidate the mystery to my dear and justly offended Sophia.

I shall remain in town 'till I know my destiny, which I shall not fail to communicate.

Dear Percival,

Yours ever,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER

LETTER II.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,
TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Charleton Priory, Sept. 179.

I DID not imagine my dear Laura, when I wrote my last letter to you, that I should so soon have occasion to exemplify those precepts of philosophy, which I recommended to your consideration.

I am now more than ever convinced that no reliance should be placed on the protestation of a lover, yet I cannot intirely agree in opinion, that "the days of chivalry are no more." I have, this evening, witnessed an instance of Knight errantry, unequalled in the records

records of Spanish prowess! But, thank heaven, the circumstance does not affect me---I assure you it amused me exceedingly. ----- Though many women would have been mortified at being so ungratefully treated---so deliberately sacrificed.

You will wonder at my composure, when I inform you, that, not four hours since that insinuating hypocrite, Mr. Courtney, eloped from the priory! Had any thing amiable or fascinating captivated his fickle mind, I should have relinquished my pretensions, and borne my injuries with philosophy; but to be rivalled by such a Sybil as Miss Lucretia Winterton, by such a deplorable object!---By one who has been the bane of all society for at least half a century! Oh, I have not patience to proceed.

* * * * *

I have

I have been interrupted by my friend, Lady Cavil, who flew on the wings of delight to remind me of my humiliation, and gratify her prominent propensity ; as I cannot, in any other language than her own, do justice to her eloquence, I shall give you our conversation verbatim ; “ Why out upon you, Sophy ? What a stupid girl you must be to suffer that old harridan to cheat you out of your conscious moon and Scotch parson ! Why if I had been treated so, I would have followed them, and broken the blacksmith’s head with his own hammer : if it were my case—in short—I should, with my unfortunate sensibility, have gone dancing mad at being so humbled ; but you, Miss, have too much pride to feel mortified. I say again, had it been my case.”

“ If it were your case, Madam,” interrupted I, “ I dare say you would be revenged ; but, being mine, I beg permission

mission to think for myself. Mr. Courtney is the best judge of his own happiness."

"Yes, and you are likely, to think by yourself," retorted Lady Cavil, with a malicious sneer, "but I won't mortify you child, for I am sorry for your disgrace. Believe me I am---Very sorry indeed---He was an amiable young man."

"My dear Lady Cavil," replied I, with a degree of *sang froid* which provoked my gentle friend almost to madness, "I believe the mortification will be general. There needs no GHOST come from the grave to tell us, that Mr. Courtney was a favourite in this family. A midnight adventure is no novelty."

This unfortunate truth arrested the elegant conclusion of her harrangue,

and ----- she vanished. As I rose to shut my door, for I was resolved that she should enter no more this night, or rather this morning, it being now past three o'clock, I heard the gallery echo with "*impertinent coquet! insolent flirt! et cetera, et cetera!*" 'Tis day break, and I have not yet closed my eyes.---Every noise I hear creates a hope of Courtney's return.

As I am heartily tired of this ungrateful subject, I will endeavour to seek repose.

Adieu, dearest Laura,

Yours affectionately,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER III.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179--.

THAT indulgent BEING who gave me a susceptible heart, who made me "tremblingly alive" to all the vicissitudes of fate, will, I trust, also give me fortitude to bear your dreadful intelligence.

Mr. Percival (for so I must now call him) will have my most earnest wishes for his future felicity; my tenderest friendship and my last sigh! Would to Heaven I could add, at no distant period.

Sophia, I must learn to suffer, I must endeavour to exercise my reason;

C 2

I must

I must remember, that my cousin is the heir to the imperious Lord Litchfield, and that I am a solitary friendless orphan!

Cruel destiny! --- most agonizing thought! that I am to be the sport of capricious fortune, and, because born to penury, ordained to pine in solitude, and, perhaps, perish, the victim of sensibility.

Happy will be that woman who is the destined wife of Mr. Percival! Yet, I do not envy her, for if she is an object of his choice, she must be amiable: envy; heaven forbid that so mean, so vile a thought, should contaminate the soul of her, who is the pupil of Madame St. Bruno.

All the face of the creation now wears a new and melancholy aspect. I no longer wish for the returning spring,
or

or quit my pillow at the break of day, with a mind at ease to contemplate its beauties! I do not, after fervent prayers, sink into delicious and unbroken slumbers; or, in my dreams, stroll in the paths of exquisite repose! No, Sophia, a thorny vale is now my wandering place, and threatening clouds o'ershadow all the prospects before me.

Yet, though my heart may be tortured with the most acute pangs, my eyes shall not, by a single tear, betray its weakness! I may sigh, but it shall be when no inquisitive intruder shall mock my sorrows—the shade of Bertha shall alone bear witness to my sufferings.

I trust Mr. Percival will be happy, oh! heavens! if I could controul his destiny, he should know nothing but delight! His days should fly on wings of rapture, and his last hour present

the bright retrospect of undisturbed tranquillity.

I am composed, and though not happy, unrepining: this unequivocal decision is far more desirable than the lingering miseries of suspense. We perpetually fashion scenes of happiness, merely to afford the dæmon of despair new victories. DESPAIR! shall she who has been nursed in the bosom of religion entertain so weak a thought! Shall she resign the hope which eternity presents, and suffering such a fiend to destroy her expectations, forget, that

“ Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
“ O’er death’s dark gulph, and all its horror hides;”

I have not communicated your intelligence to Miss Warton, I am ashamed of having entertained an idea of Mr. Percival. Alas! I wish I had never
seen

seen him ; but, having seen him, how, tell me how I shall forget him.

Who is the heiress of Lord Granmore? I have heard the name, but I cannot recollect where or when. Most likely she is in Italy by my cousin's remaining there so long---perhaps, by this time, they are married.

Edward Percival married! I am overwhelmed and faint ;---not with the laborious avocation of writing this letter, but with the more fatiguing fever of the mind, the very worst of maladies.

* * * * *

Oh ! that this agonized being could sink to rest---that my hour of annihilation could arrive before the nuptial day of Edward Percival.

I shall

I shall hate myself for not rejoicing at his acquisition of wealth; though I think I could have lived upon a scanty pittance, in a clay-built hovel, on the bleak summit of a barren mountain, and, with him, have fancied myself in elysium! What are the fascinations of wealth, that not only the vile and sordid are their votaries, but such minds as Edward Percival's confess their attractions?---That idea almost teaches me to pity him.

Yet---I will not believe that an interested idea could influence his feelings. He adores his promised bride! She is the object of his choice! Yes, yes, it must be so---then I am resigned.---My pride will not suffer me to utter a complaint, whatever my heart may suffer;--and reason will soon teach me to forget him.

No! I will remember his conversation

tion as a dream that passed over my slumbering senses. I will recall his image to my mind, as the picture of an angel, and, as such, I will revere it, and hope again to behold it in a better world.

Alas ! I have no longer any business here, I am but a miserable shadow, gliding in the gloom of monastic oblivion, and hourly treading the thin partition between my footsteps and the grave. I often look back with astonishment at those moments, when I shuddered at the thought of death, that meagre spectre, for whose approach I now wait with fond solicitude ; in whose icy arms I shall sleep unmolested, and forgotten !

Perhaps the lowly state which I have often lamented, is my greatest blessing : Had I been born to splendid enjoyments, had I been the heiress of Lord Granmore,

Granmore, the wife of Edward Percival, I might have wished to live---Oh! yes, I should with longing eyes have lingered on the confines of eternity, and have shrunk from the pale despot, like a trembling coward.

When I first came hither, I could pass whole hours in contemplating the vast and magnificent scenes which present themselves on every side of our convent. I could gaze, with admiration and delight, on the sun-gilt promontories, rising above the thin mists of evening, and displaying to the retiring beam, their sloping sides;---The eye would then wander downwards to their base, skirted with woods, and watered by glittering springs;---often have I mused and listened as they meandered through beds of wild flowers, till they lost themselves amidst the glooms of twilight. These were soothing, melancholy pleasures; harmonizing

ing the soul, and teaching it to relinquish the busy world without a sigh! But now---I view the distant prospect of the varying scenes with disgust and abhorrence; my days are darkened, by despair, and my nights disturbed with startling dreams---dreams that make reason tremble!

Or, if by chance, one pitying ray of rest,
Warms the sad inmate of my throbbing breast;
'Tis but a gleam of intellectual light
That feebly glances o'er my mental sight.
And, for a moment, dissipates the gloom,
To point my weary footsteps to the tomb.

Write to me again soon, but direct
for me *Chez Monsieur de Leitzberg Ban-*
quier a Vienne.

If any thing interesting should happen, you shall hear from me again before I depart.

Adieu,

Faithfully yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER IV.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,
TO HENRY COURTNEY.

Charleton Priory, Sept. 178..

MY DEAR COURTNEY,

DON'T fight me again for saying that I enjoyed your disappointment exceedingly! Remember that human nature is wonderfully prone to laugh at mischief: and I cannot be sorry in this instance, because I think the adventure will prove a tolerable lesson to your eccentric disposition.---Poor Miss Winterton, is the object of universal commiseration, though she bears her misfortune with becoming, dignified, and haughty philosophy; but "soft you a word or two before I go." When you are next inclined to play Lorenzo, and carry off a gentle Jessica, allow me to advise you not to rely on the fire of your own romantic enthusiasm,

siasm, but to trust to the more steady flame of phosphoric light, or suffer the god of day to witness your valorous exploits. I think Lady Cavil's warning to "remember twelve," ought to have impressed you with terror at the idea of midnight, for the remainder of your life.

I have a great mind not to tell you that I have made your peace with Sophia. She says "that the crime carries the punishment with it," and that you have nothing to dread from her resentment, if you had, you need never despair while you can find a willow, or a fish pond. I warned you of your danger: I now prescribe a remedy.

Farewell, commiserating your misfortunes, and sincerely wishing you a speedy cure,

I remain, yours truly,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER V.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO HENRY COURTNEY.

Rome, Sept. 1797.

As I began to think it an instance of folly to be wise by myself, I have of late entered into all the spirit of these rapturous regions, yet I find the image of my Laura present itself to my imagination, equally in the luxurious labyrinths of the splendid *festino*, and in the awful mazes of the ruined *coliseum*.

I thought, by mingling with the gay,
To snatch the veil of grief away ;
I hop'd, amidst the joyous train,
To break affliction's pond'rous chain ;
Vain was the hope, in vain I sought
The placid hour of careless thought.

Where

Where fashion wing'd her light career,
And sportive pleasure danc'd along.
Oft have I shunn'd the blithesome throng,
To hide th' involuntary tear !
For e'en where rapt'rous transports glow,
From the full heart the conscious tear will flow.*

I will return to Lausanne, though the eternal displeasure of my family should be the consequence. I am no slave—friendship may prevail, but force never shall ; 'tis an unpleasant circumstance to incur the resentment of a relation, but *E'meglio un buon amico che cento Parenti*. I feel the impossibility of enjoying the breezes of heaven out of the sight of Laura Fitz-Owen !

* * * * *

I was interrupted by a message from Sir Robert Littleworth. My *Lacquais*, who is a species of animal between a coxcomb and a connoisseur, entered
D 2 my

* Mrs. ROBINSON'S "Ode to the Nightingale."

my chamber, "*Signor una lettera,*" said he, from whom, Mortelli? "*ah! par mia fe by dat Cavaliere Littlewort;*" "From whom?" interrupted I.— "Ah!" returned the enraged Mortelli, raising his voice, for I believe that all foreigners suppose we are deaf in proportion as we are ignorant of their language, "*from dat babare inglese which trow his dog a la reviere for fetch le medalion from Herculaneum.*"

He then, laying the letter on the table, disdainfully quitted the apartment in a minuet step.

In order to give you an idea of this valuable virtuoso, I shall endeavour to describe him.

Pierre Baptiste, Theodore, Gasperini de Mortelli, is by birth a Frenchman; but being an antiquarian in mind as well as body, he tells me that
he

he retired to Italy to indulge his *gusto* for the fine arts ; (and allow me to add, for the pleasure of pilfering any *mi Lor Anglois en passant*, whom chance or misfortune may throw in his way ; this I know by experience !)

His dress is, if possible, more quaint than his address : Imagine a renovated mummy in a spotted tyger velvet suit, which from size and fashion, appears to have been the *Habit de Parade* of some gigantic satellite, in the court of Lewis the Fourteenth ; added to this, a collection of wool and hair, which I suppose he wishes to have mistaken for a wig, to which are suspended a small black *rosette* and a *solitaire*, carefully arranged to hide a plaited stock, which is monthly honoured by the labours of his laundress.

This epitome of every thing antedi-

D 3

luvian,

luvian, is a perpetual source of amusement for the facetious Baronet.

But to return to my morning's adventure. By the time I had finished my coffee, *il cavalier* arrived in *propria personæ*, leading poor Mortelli, whom I suppose he had encountered on the stairs, by the collar; after twirling him round half a dozen times, he threw him into an arm chair, and retreating a few paces, exclaimed,

“That's your go! Now, Mounseer, let's see how you look after your horn-pipe. Why, you wanted a good shaking, my honest Nero, to take the dust out of your rusty panther hide—what say you to another trial, my old heart of Porphyry? Or dost thou prefer postponing our *pas de deux* till a future occasion?” As I saw that he was determined to irritate Mortelli beyond his patience, by which we should have been
been

been the sufferers, I endeavoured to change the conversation, by a proposal to visit and examine the curiosities for which this city is remarkable: At the mention of curiosities, Mortelli's resentment immediately vanished, and proud of being applied to for instruction, after taking a pinch of snuff and re-adjusting his *rosette* and *solitaire*, he exclaimed, with that degree of consequence which is naturally attendant upon ignorance, "*Ab! pardi Signor, you shall see, des choses dat you have not see in your life.*"

"Shows! cried the Baronet, "Egad, Percival, this is old '*lanterna magica*' come from England.

"*Mais non, Monsieur,*" retorted Mortelli, rather piqued at the supposed degradation, "you have no such ting in England."

"Granted,

“ Granted, and I hope we never shall have such things as you in England.” looking contemptuously at our man of many names, “ but come,” continued he, “ let us know what other wild beasts there are to be seen.”

“ *Comment, Monsieur!* we have no vile bees now,” answered the astonished *lacquais*, “ but I vil shew you de famous amphitheatre, where dey were make fight !”

“ Ampitheatre ! what have you got one here ?” enquired Sir Robert.— “ *Ob ! oui Signor,*” returned Mortelli, “ I go dere every day to instruct myself.”

“ That must be a good go, by Jupiter,” retorted Littleworth, “ what, that is the riding dress of your country, I suppose, or you, perhaps, are the Merryman of the troop ?—But I’ll shew

shew you what it is to ride, I have got a couple of choice cattle here with me, and they shall run with you for what you dare, and egad I'll ride myself. How say you, my young Nimrod?"

"*Monsieur* you cannot ride in our ampitheatre, 'tis ruin."

"Ruin'd hey? What has your master shut up shop? Faith, I have a great mind to succeed him; are there any more of the same sort? any other show houses?"

The wondering Mortelli not comprehending the Baronet's meaning, respectfully informed him, that there was also the Pantheon, a place equally admired and frequented.

"No matter for that," replied Sir Robert, "the more opposition the better; nothing like it; we fellows
who

who know what's what, would always prefer a neat nag to a squalling Signora: what do you think of it my old Roman Emperor?"

This last vociferous demand was accompanied by a stroke of the shoulder which nearly annihilated the unfortunate Mortelli, who in a tremulous voice enquired, "for why are you *en colere*?"

"Colour, my old jockey," returned my eccentric countryman, "what care I for that, I drive four different colours, fleet as the roebuck, fetlocks like Hilligsberg, cropped like their master."

I endeavoured to explain the mistake which I perceived he was labouring under, but he was too much enchanted with his new plan of rivalling

ing Astley, in the Amphitheatre at Rome, to attend me.

I therefore advised him to convince himself, and when he had exposed himself sufficiently to ensure notoriety, to quit the city *a L'Anglois*.

'Tis a very mortifying circumstance that the follies of our countrymen haunt us, even in these distant regions. We fly with avidity to meet an Englishman, and with double velocity we often are obliged to fly from him.

There are indeed two advantages permitted to travellers; we are not obliged to acknowledge all the ridiculous characters with whom we associate in a foreign country, and what is done at a great distance, is not always blazoned in our native island.

Oh! Courtney, how would some of
our

our accomplished Right Honourables be able to face the records of their continental eccentricities, their treacheries in love, and their outrages against the rules of decorum; I almost think that the aquatic breezes between Dover and Calais possess the power of the Lethæan fountain, for we forget not only the soil where we have practised our follies, but even the objects who tempted us to commit them. We forget them for their absurdities, and they forget us if we have ever rendered them service.

Littleworth mistakes the wonder he excites for admiration, and his absurdities increase in proportion to the astonishment of the multitude. He has been cheated in all the various ways to which his ignorance has exposed him, and I am convinced that he will continue to be the dupe, as long as his banker furnishes the means.

But

But he who travels for adventures,
must take them as they present them-
selves, and remember that,

Non si può aver la rosa, senza le spine.

Adieu, believe me,

Yours truly,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER VI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 1790.

'ERE a short period shall elapse, I must quit Lausanne for ever. The certainty of repose is more valuable than the distant prospect of the most animated scenes.

I am of late grown very much attached to this solitary abode, and sometimes think, that when I depart, the splendour of the city which I am about to visit, will appear less pleasing. By habit we not only become reconciled to gloomy thoughts, but we cherish them with the most earnest fondness. I do not think I am formed for the lively haunts of glittering society, the pensive turn of my mind suits

suits with the cloister, but would, I fear, be lost in the brilliancy of a palace. You will not, perhaps, credit this assertion ; and, what is more, you will laugh at me when I say, that I should shrink with disgust from the vices of exalted life ; I should shudder at the thought of duplicity ; I should abhor the trivial pursuits of empty dissipation, and be gothic enough to admire the labours of genius. I should be quite antediluvian in the circles of *baut ton* ! With such sentiments, how shall I, a stranger to the world, select the most deserving minds, amidst the herd of tasteless and unfeeling objects ? Alas ! merit is often obliged, by indigence, to pay court to unenlightened baseness, and the semblance of acquiescence, enforced by poverty, may be mistaken for congenial depravity, by one unpractised in the mysteries of fate.

I have heard, that the children of genius are often the slaves of the ignorant: Heavens how my heart would ache to behold such humiliation! How my soul would shudder with disgust, when I beheld the dignity of illustrious talents, scoffed at by the upstart miscreant, or the wealthy son of vice and dissipation.

Lately expressing my wish to change the scene, I enquired of Madame St. Bruno how long it would be before we should arrive at Vienna: "Ah! my dear child," said she, "you know not the misery you covet; you will soon be disgusted with the follies of life, and I shall see you return sighing for seclusion; I know the winding mazes of a court, I have trod them, and they are over-run with foul weeds whose infectious qualities poison all who approach them. I tremble when I think of them; for, alas! they were the bane of the unhappy Bertha: Had
she

she never ventured near their fatal contamination, she had probably now been living, the friend of my bosom, the delight of my solitude."

I began to wish that we could remain here for ever; a mixture of fear and disgust anticipated the world's acquaintance: I wandered into the garden, and took with me a volume of Rousseau—he was a very extraordinary being! His writings contain the most fascinating and dangerous lessons that the mind can venture to cherish, and yet, like the pleasures of this life, they wind about the heart, at the same moment that they endanger its repose.

A terrace in the garden commands a view of all the distant country, I sat on the parapet wall, and with almost holy veneration contemplated the prospect! Often did fancy point out the jutting rock, the woods, the very seats

of St. Preux and Julie. Oh! Sophia, they were happy here, why then do I wish to wander? Why cannot I be happy also?

How often, dear enchanting scenes,
how often have I visited your hallowed
mazes,

Where, from the wild romantic cliffs around,
The headlong torrents fall with hollow sound,
And stealing through the winding vale below,
Unseen thro' mid-day glooms incessant flow:
While sullen echo's airy tongue betrays,
Where round her seat the rippling channel strays;
While the lone owl, her lured haunts among,
To the pale moon repeats her nightly song.

We have made the necessary preparations for our long journey: the whole community is overpowered with regret for the loss of our amiable abbess. She illumined even their solitude with the lustre of her mind. When she departs, all will be melancholy and forlorn!

Belinda

Belinda Warton is very formal of late, and since the scene at the farm of Terese, she has not treated me with her usual friendly attention, she is assiduously occupied in paying her court to Madame St. Bruno, and by the most flattering devotion wishes to rival me in her affections ; but the regard which is to be obtained by falshood and servile adulation, is not worthy of my acceptance. Conscious of my zeal and sincerity, where I find an object worthy of my esteem, I can easily dispense with the friendship of a low and little mind.

Madame St. Bruno is too amiable and enlightened a woman to suffer imposition long, and the sudden change in Belinda's conduct will rather awaken her suspicions than impose upon her understanding. Claudine tells me, she has spoken unkindly of me to several of the nuns, and in the most jealous terms

terms condemned our abbess for allowing me so much liberty ; she turned my poor little shrine into ridicule, and said, it was impious to pay my devotions at the grave of a vile suicide.— Oh! Sophia, I cannot forgive the expression—I cannot think of it without shedding tears.

Have you heard any thing more about the heiress of Lord Granmore ? I believe Mr. Percival is yet in Italy, we have received no letters from him lately. Adieu, till I am again at leisure.

I was summoned to receive a message from Terese de Bouvais. She has some fruit and preserves, which she wishes me to accept before I depart ; I shall call upon her if I can obtain leave, to-morrow after matins, but I shall tell the reason of my visit, for I never will
again

again expose myself to the detection
of a falsehood.

Adieu! dear Sophia,

Yours, faithfully,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Priory, Sept. 1790.

I NEED not communicate to you the amours of Courtney and Miss Winton, I suppose the tale has already proved an infinite source of amusement, but of the most ridiculous part of the adventure you are yet to be informed.

Courtney's servant, who was left to guard the deluded damsel, conveyed her to an Inn, at about three miles distant from the scene of humiliation, and then returned to the Priory, where
he

he gave a most ludicrous description of the disasters of the preceding night.

The triumphant smiles of Lady Cavil during the recital, led me to imagine that she was more earnestly interested in the fate of Mr. Courtney than I had before suspected, or that mere sympathy for Sophia would have dictated. As there was no time to lose, I proposed, that Miss Cleveland, Lady Cavil, and myself, should sally forth, and rescue this "true virgin here distress'd;" but Sophia, from motives of delicacy, not wishing to witness the confusion of a fallen enemy, declined the enterprise, and Lady Morland was prevailed on to supply her place.

The old caravan was again put into motion, and we arrived at the Inn just time enough to snatch our fair fugitive from that ponderous vehicle called the Bath

Bath Fly, in which she had meditated a precipitate retreat.

Lady Cavil, the moment she perceived our smuggler under weigh, hailed her, and instantly brought her to, by a volley of most soothing congratulations, which set the whole party in a roar of laughter.

A respectable looking old clergyman hearing the "shrill clarion" of Lady Cavil, thrust his head out of the window of the stage coach, to demand the cause of the sudden uproar. "Only a young lady who eloped last night, and is reclaimed by her friends," answered Lady Cavil.

"Then, Madam, you have missed the object of your pursuit," returned the traveller, "for I assure you there are no passengers in our carriage but this worthy old gentlewoman and myself."

We

We immediately distinguished Miss Winterton's voice, reproving her sententious companion, in the tone and language of a second Xantippe.

"Sir, if you will have the politeness to withdraw that enormous wig of yours, I will, with your permission, answer for myself, I am the Lady for whom this officious party are enquiring.

"Madam," returned he, "I assure you once more, that you are not the person they are seeking for ; they said they were following a young Lady ; a Lady who had eloped from her friends."

Poh! poh! nonsense! I tell you ; but I shan't stay to convince such an impertinent old pedant ; open the door, coachman : " saying this, she quitted her astonished companion, who seemed extremely rejoiced at her departure.

Miss Winterton now advanced towards us, and looking disdainfully at me, declared, that if she had known that she was to encounter the insolent sarcasms of that Badgering Baronet, she should certainly have proceeded to London.

“Come, come, Miss Winterton,” said Lady Cavil, “this is carrying the jest too far, it does not require the skill of a magician to devise your motive for proceeding to London.”

“My Lady Cavil,” interrupted Miss Winterton, while her features bore testimony to the irritation of her mind, “I warn you to let me hear no more scandal; remember, that a gentlewoman is not to be slandered with impunity.”

“Oh, fie!” exclaimed Lady Moreland, as the indignation of her polished mind

mind flushed over her lovely countenance,---“ is that the language of a woman of education? I really blush, Miss Winterton, to hear you utter a threat so ill-bred and illiberal.”

“ That the Lady is gentle,” rejoined I, “ will, I believe, be a matter of some doubt; but that she is a woman is evident, from her credulity yesterday evening and the proof we have witnessed of her recent conquest.”

“ Sir,” retorted our enraged spinster, “ if by your impertinent innuendoes you allude to my having been duped by the machinations of that bamboozling priest, Mr. Henry Courtney, I must beg leave to remark, that I am not the first young Lady who has been drawn aside by your deluding sex.”

As I found that her rage increased, I desired Lady Cavil to soften her sar-

castic severity, and assist me in persuading Miss Winterton to return with us.

After much soothing and flattering, I undertook to be the Sir Clement Cottrell of the occasion, and after handing her into the carriage, with all the formality of the *vieille cour*, proceeded with our reclaimed runaway to the Priory, from whence I now write.

You shall hear from me again when Courtney arrives, I dare say he will afford fresh subject for entertainment.

Dear Percival,

Yours,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179..

I AM this instant returned from the farm of *Terese de Bouvais*, where I found a letter from my cousin, Mr. Percival; a letter which has awakened all my regrets, and filled my heart with the most extreme affliction.

He certainly is yet ignorant of his uncle's intentions respecting an alliance for him, he professes that sort of esteem, for I dare not call it by a more tender name, for me, which convinces me that he is now unacquainted with his destiny.

Alas! Sophia, what shall I say in answer to his letter? Shall I be the

F 3.

messenger

messenger of unpleasing intelligence ? Shall I occasion a pang in the bosom of Edward Percival ? Impossible !”

The common rules of politeness will forbid my silence ; yet, ought I to hold a clandestine correspondence with one who is on the point of marriage with another woman ? Certainly not.

Then will not remorse agonize my breast, if I deceive Madame St. Bruno ? She who has been a mother to me . Oh ! my soul shrinks at the idea of hypocrisy ; I will answer his letter, but my dear Monitress shall see what I write : there can be no cause for dread where there is nothing to conceal, and I would not have the perpetual fear of exposure upon my mind for all that the universe could bestow, not even for the affection of the amiable Edward. He will, if he has a generous liberal mind, if, I know he has, therefore he will applaud my candour,

candour, and respect me for my discretion.

There is nothing in his letter that can present a single hope to my imagination—beyond the most perfect friendship; I thank heaven he only esteems me as a relation—for any professions of love, would, circumstanced as he will shortly be, overwhelm me with despair: I trust I should have fortitude to refuse his hand so promised to another—but the only safe resolution a feeling mind can make, is to avoid every shadow of temptation.

I shall immediately shew Mr. Percival's letter to Madame St. Bruno, I hope she will suffer me to answer it; if only a single line, to say that I am grateful for his good opinion.

Yet, why does he write to me at all?
I will not try to discover his motive; I
will

will not suppose, even for an instant, that he had any reason for remembering me ; I will attribute his attentions to the impulse of *bienseance* : I know he is the epitome of every thing polished ; I am not indebted to him, but to nature, that made his mind so perfect.

I shall call upon Terese this evening, and tell hēr, that if any more letters arrive, after I depart, she may send them to Vienna. I long to have an opportunity of convincing Madame St. Bruno of my candour.

I have not mentioned the letter to Miss Warton, she would ridicule Mr. Percival's civility, and I could not bear to hear his name mentioned disrespectfully.

Adieu, my dear Sophia, faithfully

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Rome, Sept. 179-.

WILL you, my charming cousin, pardon me for addressing you? Will you believe that my solicitude for your happiness and my earnest wishes to hear of its continuance, prompt my pen to trouble you with this unexpected interruption?

I have written three letters to Madame St. Bruno, but have not been honored with any answer: I did hope, to embrace the bewitching characters of your pen; but, alas! such an instance

stance of condescension was not ordained to enchant my senses.

My tour has afforded but little amusement, and still less instruction; I know not how it is, but I have one Being perpetually before me—I can only think of what I have seen, and the recollection places every new object in an unfavorable point of view.

I shall, however, proceed on my route, and with your permission will give you an account of my travels. Happy should I be, if you would suggest those pursuits which you think most advantageous; if you would become my preceptress, amiable Laura, every path would appear scattered with roses, the air ambrosial, and the scenes decked with eternal splendour, had I such a guide! I will not tell you my prospects now, you will, perhaps, doubt my veracity.

It

It is the very extent of my ambition to acquire your good opinion ; your excellent heart and uncontaminated mind must be the sources of all that is worthy of imitation and esteem ! I look in vain for your resemblance in these luxurious regions, where all is deception, and every heart pants for transitory pleasures : Hapless beings ! they know not the charm of society like yours, or that the most supreme delight the human mind can experience is that of contemplating the perfections of Laura Fitz-Owen.

Forgive me, my lovely cousin, you see I take upon me already the privilege of relationship, and, by daring to utter the truth, evince my good taste, and pay the tribute due to your superior qualifications. Pray write to me, if only to say that you honor me with your friendship, I ask no more ; presumption

sumption shall not be reckoned in the catalogue of my follies.

Charming Laura, adieu! do not forget your admiring friend and affectionate cousin,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER X.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Rome, Sept. 179.

DEAR COLVILLE,

I ONLY remain here a few days, in hopes of an answer to a letter I have written to Switzerland, and to enjoy those researches, from which I was debarred by the perpetual buffoonery of my facetious countryman, Sir Robert Littleworth.

He is gone to Florence, whither I shall soon follow him, not for the pleasure of his enlightened conversation, but because I shall then be some miles nearer to all that I adore upon earth.

The abhorrence I feel at the idea of prejudice, conceiving it only to be the offspring of little minds, prevents my

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taking

taking any antipathy to the people of this capital on account of traits existing upon record against them ; I can believe, that friendship is the inmate of a Roman breast, even while I contemplate the spot where Cæsar fell by the poignard of Brutus ! And though an hundred and seventy women were condemned to suffer death, on the single assertion of a slave, who accused them of having conspired to poison the citizens ; I can credit the idea, that gallantry towards the bewitching sex, still exists in the mind of an Italian ! But I can scarcely believe, from the specimens I have beheld of the Roman Matrons of the present day, that some of their great grandmamas committed suicide to preserve their chastity ! Alas ! how is the race degenerated.

I have, under the protection of my learned Mortelli, visited the Temple of Mars, which, though built three hundred

hundred and eighty years before the Christian Æra, would, even in its present state, cause the cheek of some of our modern architects to glow with shame.

Of the pantheon, erected by the Emperor, Augustus Cæsar, we have a wretched imitation raised by—subscription! But it is impossible to judge of the beauty of our public edifices, while they are surrounded by stable yards, taverns, breweries, and blacksmith's shops! necessary evils that ought to be confined to their proper sphere, like many others—that disgrace this country.

Yet, I shall forbear any more remarks on our smoky Metropolis, lest you should suppose me infected with the spirit of reformation, and while I have power to restrain my pen, I subscribe myself,

Yours,

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EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER XI.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179..

THAT abhorrence of deceit which induced me to disclose Mr. Percival's Letter to Madame St. Bruno, has perhaps inflicted the severest penance that my heart could possibly experience.

If candour is to be rewarded with the punishment of regret, where is the justice we hope for from heaven? I do not say, that we ought to expect a recompence for such actions as our duty towards society demands; but there should be some compensation, in this world of hypocrisy, for those who despise its deceptions.

My

My dear Sophia, I read my cousin's letter to Madame St. Bruno, and she has positively enjoined me not to answer it! Her injunctions were accompanied by looks so touching, words so ambiguous, and a manner so impressive, that I dared not even offer an expostulation.

Doubtless she has heard of his intended marriage; and the penetration with which she surveys all the transactions of life, perhaps induces her to take such precautions as will prevent any future reflections on my conduct.

I ought to applaud her circumspection—but, alas! my dear friend, we are apt to consider the prudent counsel of those entrusted with the care of our education, as the barbarous shackles of a too severe restriction:—Madame St. Bruno can have no motive but to shield me from danger; and reason,

gratitude, all the sentiments of my heart, demand my compliance.

The unfortunate discovery of Mr. Percival's picture, has, perhaps, awakened her suspicions ; but she ought to know, that the mind, susceptible of the most refined sensations, is incapable of a mean or degrading action. The idea that my cousin is betrothed to the heir-ess of Lord Granmore, would induce me to reject any clandestine overtures he could make ; the heart that is worthy of my acceptance must never know repentance of its choice ; its hopes, its affections, must be devoted to me only. I think similiarity of sentiment as necessary to ensure felicity, as equality of age ; neither could I bear the future reproaches of his mercenary guardian, who would deem my want of fortune the greatest crime attached to the name of woman.

I know

I know but little of the world, yet I have such a rooted antipathy to every interested idea, that if I possessed great wealth, I believe I should never marry, fearing it would be the cause of my husband's preference; I should think I had purchased his every smile, and should rather attribute his attentions to the gifts of fortune, than those of nature.

I should not esteem Mr. Percival so much as I do, if he were wholly independent; every addition to his wealth would, by placing him at a greater distance, check the warmth of my esteem; for a vast difference of rank is the bane of love, which more frequently seeks the cottage than the palace, because equality is congenial to its influence.

Miss Warton is no longer the friend
of

of my heart ; she is jealous of Madame St. Bruno's kindness towards me, and treats me with an insolent *bauteur*, which, while it excites my pity, makes me smile, because I feel its want of power to hurt me.

We shall be detained here six weeks longer, on account of some formalities requisite to be observed previous to the departure of our beloved abbess. The good old nun, Claudine Laval, who is a great favourite, will accompany us to Germany ; she nursed Madame St. Bruno from her infancy, and though I do not remember the kindness of a mother, I can readily conceive, that a rooted affection is the certain consequence of early and tender impressions.

I shall soon direct my thoughts to new and livelier scenes ; you see I
am

am a vain boaster, for, alas! I fear those thoughts are not to be so easily controuled.

Adieu, Sophia,

Sincerely and affectionately

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

TO HENRY COURTNEY.

Charleton, Oct. 1790.

MY DEAR COURTNEY,

YOU may spare yourself the trouble of a journey into Berkshire, our party is most completely deranged, and we all seem destined to wander different ways.

This Morning Lady Cavil received a letter from her warlike spouse, Sir James, announcing his return—on reading this intelligence, she appeared to be uncommonly rejoiced—yet the gloom her features displayed, during the remainder of the day, did not exactly correspond with the first rapturous impulse.

Miss

Miss Winterton is also very impatient to visit London, I believe that you are the cause of all her woe. 'Tis really scandalous that a man of your sacred function should amuse himself by seducing the unsuspecting innocent mind of this fair young creature! Since I am relating the vicissitudes of love, I may as well confess that the adorable Lady Moreland has made a sort of a scratch upon my *ci devant impenetrable* heart, but her worthy Lord intends to pass the winter in Italy, and as I have no inclination to travel a thousand miles upon a sleeveless errand, I must even relinquish my lovely summer rose, and content myself with tormenting that frozen bud of beauty Helleborous Winterton.

The gallant Sir Hervey Wentworth has accepted an apartment in my house till the end of November, after which
period

period all the eloquence of Cicero would not prevent his displaying the hospitalities of Charleton Priory.

Sophia Cleveland being of age in three months, will unquestionably return to town, and fix on some happy hero, who will be the bane of thy repose, and with whom I hope she will revenge the infidelities of thy summer campaign.

I hear that our friend, Edward Percival, is coming home, to take unto him a wife; I am sure he's very obliging; and I dare swear we shall all thank him heartily.

Adieu, Sophia does not send her compliments.

Yours,

FRANCIS COLVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Oct. 179-.

YESTERDAY, the sixth of October, being the *fete de St. Bruno*, the villagers prepared a rural festival, in compliment to our amiable abbess. The farm of old Terese was the grand rendezvous; she had decorated her homely mansion with a simplicity, more striking than the most costly fabric could have exhibited. The trees before the thatched dwelling were ornamented with wreaths of flowers, fragments of ribbon, and small square pieces of glass. These are gaudy trappings of which you have no idea in England, but which are universally displayed, during the Carnival, in the villages

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and small towns of Germany and Switzerland.

The fare within was equally gay with the exterior appendages ; all the fruits of the season in the greatest perfection ; eggs, dressed in a variety of ways ; white bread, new cheese, and wines of the most delicious flavour, formed a repast more luxurious than an imperial banquet.

Terese, who is near seventy years of age, danced on the green with her old *bon garcon*, and was as lively as the youngest in the group.

The village lasses were neatly dressed ; the white jacket, coloured petticoat, the hair curiously braided, and the simple handkerchiefs fastened round their heads, and adorned with boquets of real flowers, similar to those which half concealed their bosoms, rendered

rendered them the most charming objects that fancy can picture, or truth describe.

They dance wonderfully well! Every movement is natural and captivating; they wear no stays; their jackets are laced tight as corsets, and the form being thus at ease, becomes exquisitely graceful, and perfectly unlike our English women, who conceal both beauty and deformity beneath a tight whalebone armour, and a long slovenly petticoat.

The peasants were habited with equal neatness, their hats were decorated with coloured ribbands, the pledges of artless affection; we danced till the moon rose, and even then reluctantly separated.

In the course of the evening, fatigued with the unceasing exercise of

the day, I sat myself on a bench under a tree beside the loquacious old Terese—she had laughed and chatted from the hour of sun-rise, and nature at length began to languish for repose.

On a sudden she became pensive, and bursting into tears, seemed overwhelmed with some unwelcome recollection of painful import.

“Terese,” said I, “you have exhausted your spirits, you shall drink some *liqueur*, your vivacity is beyond your strength. Shall I go and get some refreshment for you?”

She continued to weep.

She gazed at me for a moment, and her tears flowed abundantly. “What afflicts you?” added I, “this is a day of festivity, Madame St. Bruno will be
grieved

grieved to see it interrupted by sorrow."

"Heaven forbid!" replied she, "that I should give her a moment's pain! She is too good a woman not to expect happiness; there never was her equal—except one."

"You need not make the exception," returned I, "she is unequalled!" The old woman clasping her hand, sighed deeply.

"You did not know the Lady Bertha," replied she, "Heaven bless her, she's a saint; that's certain."

"The Lady Bertha! what of her? Oh! tell me, my dear Terese, tell me all you know?" said I, while my blood seemed to own a quickened circulation, and my lips quivered with trembling solicitude. "Oh! 'tis a long

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and dismal story ; she is dead, she died at your convent. I never shall forget her ; Heaven knows. “ Yes, she expired within your walls. I know it, Terese, but who was she ? How long has she been dead ? ”

“ She was,” continued the simple old soul, “ the sister of Madame St. Bruno ; the only darling sister, and just such another as herself.” My surprise was infinite !

I leaned my head against the tree, to recover my faculties, almost overwhelmed by such intelligence. The good venerable woman continued her story—“ She was god-mother to my grandson, who was born this day eighteen years, the same hour his poor mother died.

At this moment Madame St. Bruno approached

approached us, smiling; never did I feel a virtue in dissembling till then.

“Why don’t you dance, Laura?” said she, “has Terese set you the example of idleness? Are you not well, my dear child? You look sorrowful; I fear, my dear Laura, that the fatigues of the day have been too powerful for you.”

I rose, she took hold of my arm, and we joined the throng, who were now almost hidden in the shades of twilight. I was silent with astonishment at what Terese had revealed to me.

“’Tis near the hour of vespers, I must go,” said Madame St. Bruno, “but if you and the rest of the English girls, like to stay, Terese will send her grandson to see you safe home, Claudine will remain with you, but

but mind, you must not remain above an hour longer ; remember, my dear Laura, our gates are shut at nine."

I joyfully accepted her proposal, she desired the protection of a rustic, and returned to the convent.

I instantly ran to Terese, and conjured her to proceed with her history of the Lady Bertha.

"*Ma foi!*" said she, "I don't know much: I recollect when she came to the convent, next *fete de noel* it will be nineteen years, she was extremely beautiful, and somewhat younger than your Lady Abbess. She was a married lady, some said she was a widow, for she had a little girl with her, a fine baby, as like her mother as two daisies."

"Is her daughter still in the convent?"

"Why,

“Why, that I cannot tell: Shortly after she came to Lausanne, I went to see my friends in Languedoc, I remained with them five years, and when I returned, I found that the Lady Bertha was dead, and I never heard any thing more about the child; I suppose she has left the convent, otherwise you would know her by her name: they say her father’s relations are very rich and powerful, and of high quality.”——

“What was her family name, can you tell me?”

“I cannot recollect,” said Terese, “but she used to come to our farm very often, and walk in our garden, and read; she made my husband build a *bosquet* of roses and myrtle, and she would sit beneath their shade for whole hours and cry sadly—I have some of her books now within, and if you have a mind you shall see them.”

I thanked

I thanked her, and eagerly begged that she would go with me into the house, and gratify my wish.

We went to her chamber, she took a parcel from her drawer, inclosed in twenty papers; she unwrapped them carefully, and the first she gave me I eagerly opened, it was an edition of Italian Poems; on the title page was written,

“BERTHA, COUNTESS OF GRANMORE.”

It fell from my trembling hand, and I fainted.

On my recovery, I found Miss Warton supporting my head against her bosom—she kissed my forehead, I almost forgave her former unkindness: So soothing is sympathy to the heart, pressed by contending sorrows! In the first moment of recollection, I snatched

snatched up the volume which lay on the floor ; again I read the name, and again my perturbation was extreme.

“ Will you give me this book, Terese ?” said I, earnestly, and half putting it into my pocket while I spoke.

“ Aye, and welcome, I cannot read it,” replied she, “ ’Tis of no use to me : By your being so frightened at only looking into it, I suppose ’tis some dismal tale, and we have all troubles enough in this world without reading melancholy histories. I really think these kind of books made the Lady Bertha so sad, for she used to weep over them for hours together.”

I told Belinda I was ready to attend her ; we joined the other pensioners and proceeded towards home. We were obliged to go close by the shrine of Bertha, the moon shone clear, and
the

the serene air scarcely fanned the leaves of ivy that mantle the ruin! As we passed the great arch, I plainly saw the turf glittering with dew: Oh! Sophia, what were my feelings?

I returned to my chamber, the whole night was passed in ruminating on the name, and divining who could be the daughter of Lady Granmore; the result of my night's study was, that she must have been conveyed to some other part of the continent, for no such name remained in the convent.

At day break I opened my book, which I had placed under my pillow, and upon examining the pages I observed several passages marked with a pencil, and the name of Arthur written in many places, and in some, nearly effaced by blots, which appear to have been the tears of the unhappy reader.

Thus

Thus has every sense of solicitude been awakened without a possibility of the events being fully elucidated. Indeed I am farther from hope than ever, because delicacy will now oblige me to be silent upon the subject, on account of Madame St. Bruno.

Adieu, dear Sophia,

Affectionately yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER XIV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE.

Rome, Oct. 179.

I HAVE only time to say, that I am determined this night to set out for Lausanne.

I know you will condemn my eccentric resolution, you will laugh at my romantic exploit, but I can pardon you for both.

You have never seen Laura Fitz-Owen!

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, July, 179.-

THE day after to-morrow we depart. Every thing is arranged for the journey.

My time has been much occupied in finishing a piece of embroidery, for the altar of our new chapel ; for, as I had nearly done it, I did not like that it should be completed by other hands.

I was this morning early at my work, when Madame St. Bruno entered. " Laura," said she, " you are very diligent indeed ! " I raised my
I 2 eyes,

eyes, and was going to answer—at that instant I observed her take up the book given to me by Terese! I had just been reading, and had unguardedly laid it on my frame. She opened it carelessly.

I could not prevent her seeing its contents; it was too late; she turned as pale as ashes, and trembling enquired where I had found it.

“Oh! my dear Madam,” said I, “be not alarmed, I had it from Terese de Bouvais. She knows not where the Lady Bertha is buried, or the cause of her death. The secret shall rest in my bosom.”

“I hope it will,” replied Madame St. Bruno; Nay, I most earnestly conjure you, to promise most sacredly that it never shall transpire in the convent. She was my sister! a time perhaps

perhaps will come, when the secret of her mournful life will be known. It was her last request, that it should not be divulged till a stated period ;—that period is not far distant—and there is but one person ordained to know it.”

“ Rely on my fidelity,” said I, rising and embracing her, “ I would rather expire than wound your sensibility.”

“ I believe you,” rejoined Madame St. Bruno, “ and never will again offend your delicate mind by further injunctions. I kissed her trembling hand — and she quitted my apartment.

I wish, Sophia, you would enquire at what place the daughter of Lord Granmore resides ; I am anxious to know more, of her connections with the Litchfield family, and why she is

the destined wife of Mr. Percival.—
Direct your answer to me as before
mentioned, at Vienna.

Adieu,

Yours faithfully,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

London, Nov. 179-

MY DEAREST LAURA,

YESTERDAY evening we arrived in Town from Charleton Priory. Lady Cavil has received a letter from Sir James, intimating his intended return. This intelligence, which, from his amiable character, and the affection she professes for him, ought to occasion great satisfaction, seems to have produced a most contrary effect. That *gaiete de cœur* which formerly marked every example of her eccentric mind, is now succeeded by the most sullen discontent. The anticipation of decorus

rus constraint seems to have banished every prospect of future delight.

In the course of the ensuing month, you will receive a letter from me, through the hands of Lady Moreland. You will find in my amiable friend every thing to admire and attach. She is the daughter of one of our most wealthy merchants, who gave her in marriage to that antiquated son of fashion, Lord Moreland, to indulge his *mania* for the name of nobility ; and who fancied, that by quartering his arms with those decorated by a coronet, he acquired consequence ; not recollecting that the sterling virtues of his ancestors for many centuries, were disgraced by their alliance with the tinsel trappings of modern heraldry.

Lady Moreland accompanies her husband to Italy, whither he is ordered by his physicians for the benefit
of

of his health. But as he wishes to avoid travelling through France, in its present hostile state, he has decided to take Vienna in his route to Naples.

I have not yet obtained any intelligence respecting Lord Granmore's daughter. I understand she is a nineteenth cousin of Lord Litchfield's, and that the family title is extinct. Edward Percival is not yet arrived; and I trust he has strength of mind sufficient to resist the tyranny of his sordid relations. I can forgive the wretch, who, nursed in the lap of obscurity and ignorance, suffers his bewildered imagination to be dazzled by the *ignis fatuus* of superficial endowments: but the independent---enlightened mind of Edward Percival! no, Laura, I never can believe that he will contradict the bright promise of early virtues, by yielding himself a voluntary sacrifice to interested motives.

I shall

I shall in a short time be of age, and receive my fortune ; which will afford me little gratification, unless I am destined to share it with Courtney.--- Happy shall I be to convince the world that my heart, at least is not swayed by avarice, and to prove that I consider the favours of Heaven as bestowed only to afford us opportunities of rendering those content who are less fortunate.

When I look back upon the last two years of my life, which I have lost with Lady Cavil, since I left the convent at Paris ; and compare them with the few months I resided in the neighbourhood of Geneva, I feel nothing but disgust at the dissipations of life, and only value that period which marked the commencement of our friendship !

You will think me pedantic ; but you are not a competent judge ; for the
short

short time you passed in the society of the world, was at so early an age, that you were incapable of forming any decisive opinion.

Adieu,

Sincerely yours,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Nov. 179.

I CAN scarcely hope that this letter will find you in Italy, as, by what is reported in England respecting Lord Litchfield's intentions, I conclude you are now hastening to obey his wishes.

Your mother is enraptured at the idea of your intended alliance ; and I believe a fortune will not be unacceptable to you ; as good Mrs. Percival has very dexterously dissipated the property entrusted to her care.

I should not have been the messenger of bad news, had I not heard that your intended bride has one of the
largest

largest fortunes in this kingdom.---
But as I find Lord Litchfield has already conveyed to you this joyful intelligence, I shall only add, that you have my most hearty congratulations.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XVIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Lausanne, Sept. 179.

TIME only allows me five minutes to say, that the carriages are waiting at the gate of our convent. I have taken leave of the dear old Terese; I have embraced all the community; I have received the benediction of *Pere* Leonard; I have wept over the turf that conceals the remains of Lady Bertha.

Our party consists of Madame St. Bruno, Miss Warton, Claudine Laval, (our favourite old nun,) and myself; a *courier de poste*, and two *femmes des chambres*.

Had

Had I never known the treasure which my Shrine contains, Oh! how joyfully should I have departed. Let me not indulge melancholy ideas; I must comfort Madame St. Bruno, for she wants consolation, and the moment of distress is the most sacred to the feelings of genuine friendship.

Belinda is in high spirits; a monastic life was always her aversion; therefore 'tis not astonishing that she is delighted at the thought of obtaining more liberty; and her expectations are greatly raised by Madame St. Bruno's kind promise of much indulgence when we arrive at Vienna. It will be some time before she can be perfectly established in her new situation; and during the interval we shall reside with her family.

Poor Claudine seems to regret leaving the ashes of Lady Granmore, as
K 2 much

much as I do. I love her for her tenderness, and shall never forget it.

Adieu, adieu ; all is ready.

Affectionately yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Lausanne, Nov. 179.

I WRITE this letter at the abode of Terese de Bouvais. Ah! Laura, loveliest of women, I can no longer restrain my frenzy. I am overwhelmed with despair.

I hoped to have found that consolation which your presence alone can afford me. With what rapture did I behold, far off, the turrets of your once solitary habitation. Oh! God! how did my heart palpitate when I approached its confines! Judge of my agony, when I found you had quitted Lausanne six days. The hour which shall announce my departure from this

K 3

sublunary

sublunary sphere, will not bring a pang so excruciating.

Laura! I adore you! I never will marry; I never will think, except with indifference, of any other woman! You were the wife of my heart from the first hour I beheld you. A ceremony of a few minutes would bind our interests in holy bondage; but I am already thine, for every faculty of my soul confesses the union.

Gracious heaven, with what veneration do I behold this lowly peaceful dwelling, which you have so often embellished with your presence! I have tormented Terese with ten thousand questions; I have visited every spot distinguished by your partiality. She must think me distracted. A las! she is not much mistaken. I am indeed the most unfortunate of beings.

Ah!

Ah! my amiable, my adored cousin! if you had resolution to fly from your prison---if you had confidence in my sincerity---my affection---we might be happy. Say but that you will encourage the hope, and you shall see me at the grate of your convent---the humble suppliant---the defender of your honour-- the slave of your commands---and, in a few hours, the husband of your bosom.

Pardon me, Laura ; I am wild with despair! Console me, I entreat you---or, promise not to forget me. I would rather be hated than not remembered.

I shall not wonder at your incredulity. I shall not blame your caution ; I know I am young, and that the heart, scarcely able to decide upon its own feelings, is apt to shrink from the idea of captivity. Youth is the period
of

of capricious fancy ; but you do not know me. Alas ! how should you ? till this hour, I never knew myself.

The summons of Lord Litchfield has torn every fibre of my heart. I am commanded to sell my peace of mind ! I am recalled to marry a woman I have never seen ; perhaps hateful to my sight, of a mind unworthy of my attachment ; I will perish rather than be the victim of such an union ! What must be the result of such a marriage ? What the inevitable progress towards destruction ? indifference, disgust, abhorrence, and disgrace ! The very idea fills my soul with horror !

Is wealth necessary to our happiness ? Ah, Laura ! can we not live in some remote corner of England—unknown---unenvied---unmolested ? Or if sordid relations should persecute us, if fortune

tune should frown coldly on our union——

“Hath Britain all the sun that shines?”

“There’s living out of Britain!”

I would smile at the threats of Poverty; I would toil to support you; I would labour through the varying seasons like the poorest peasant: your smiles would reward me; and when the daily task subsided, we would find in a straw roofed habitation, the blessing of repose! Repose, the result of conscious integrity!

Perish the thought that would lead me to an interested sacrifice! Laura, you are to me worlds of treasure! I do not covet the enjoyments of contracted minds, who wed for interest, and naturally despise the object of their degradation.

Terese has promised to forward this letter. She has also given me your address

address at Vienna. Barbarous was the fate which bore you from me. Six little days had saved me from distraction.

I go to England, but you are still with me!--your image is my only consolation.

Alas! how wretched is that being, who feeds his fancy on air-built fascinations. Do you ever think of me? am I not wholly indifferent to you? say but one soothing word; I am in want of some meek aid to calm my feverish senses: but I will endeavour to be patient.

Adieu, adieu; forgive my presumption; receive my vows of unalterable fidelity.

The vast distance between us leaves every action in the mist of obscurity. Perhaps, while I am writing, some favoured

favoured happy mortal claims a right
in your affections ; yet, Laura, while I
am absent from you,

‘ Endless and sharp will be my woes !

“ No ray of comfort shall I see !

And yet, who knows——alas ! who knows,

how wilt e’er remember me ! ”

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

SIMON GALLIARD,

TO THE REV. H. COURTNEY.

Litchfield Abbey, Nov. 1790.

SIR,

MY worthy lady being denounced by the physician to be in very emigrant danger, I cannot help imposing that her desolation will soon take place.--- She is very solicitress to result with you deserving the propriety which young Mr. Percival will find as AIR after her department from this world. I most earnestly inquest you to acknowledge the deceit of this letter, and receed to Litchfield Abbey without future relay.

Our

Our human doctor Feasible has deserted all his power, and proscribed every thing his heart afforded to cajole my lady, but in vain, for the goat has got hold of her again, and I fear will carry her off.

From, most obliging Sir,

Your humble servant,

SIMON OALLIARD.

LETTER XXI.

HENRY COURTNEY,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

London, Nov. 1790.

DEAR COLVILLE,

I AM this instant sent for by Mrs. Percival. I cannot tell whether dread of the exposure which must take place when she meets her son "at count," or chagrin, owing to her losses at the faro table, is the cause ; but I find she is going to take a long credit for one, and become a dormant partner in the other.

Adieu! I have only a moment to
write

write this, while my chaise is getting ready.

You shall hear from me on my arrival at the Abbey.

Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

LETTER XXII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Vienna, Dec. 179-.

WE have been five days in this splendid and luxurious city. You will forgive me for not writing the instant I arrived, when I tell you that we have had every hour employed in paying visits; and as the Germans are not only ostentatious, but hospitable, our invitations have been innumerable, both to see and be seen.

The Baron de Waldberg, who is Madame St. Bruno's uncle, and who holds many distinguished places at this court, is the most pleasant and gallant man, of his time of life, I believe, in Europe. The baroness, his wife, has
been

been very handsome ; she is sixty-two years of age ; just seven years younger than her husband ; but still lively and engaging.

The evening after our arrival, she invited Miss Warton and myself to her assembly. We were accompanied thither by Madame de Leitzberg, our banker's wife, a charming and accomplished woman. Our adored abbess declines every species of mixed society ; she, therefore, was happy to place us under the protection of so prudent a chaperone, and requested that she would, to use her own words, " shew the children a little of the world, for," added she, " they think it is a perfect paradise ; but they will find themselves mistaken, and be glad to return to their monastic quiet."

The party at the baron's was extremely splendid ; and as the scene was

entirely new to me, Madame de Leitzberg was employed the whole evening in explaining the names and situations of the different visitors, among whom were some of the most distinguished characters in the country; you will believe that in a city, containing two hundred thousand inhabitants, 'tis not very difficult to select a brilliant circle, where each endeavours to amuse—and self is the last object which is considered.

The women are in general fair and handsome, more like the English than any other nation. They are lively, sociable, and unaffected; passionately fond of dress and play. Their houses are more splendid in their exterior, than in their furniture, yet they are neat and convenient. Hospitality is their pleasure and their pride.

The music of the country follows very close upon that of Italy. I need
not

not mention the compositions of Handel, Bach, and Haydn, so much admired in Britain, in order to prove the justice of my opinion.

Literature is much esteemed, and zealously cultivated here. I do not like the German, when spoken by a female ; but the French and Latin are universally understood in all the best societies ; and, as I have some little knowledge of the Italian, which nearly approaches the latter, I am never at a loss for conversation, though the French seems my native language.

You cannot conceive how kind Madame St. Bruno has been since our arrival ; she has presented me a thousand elegant baubles, and ordered all my articles of dress in the very best fashion. I do not know my own figure. Belinda is also much improved in looks, but is grown so haughty, that she seldom

dom condescends to converse with me. I am impatient to see your charming and amiable friend, Lady Moreland.

To-morrow we visit the Imperial library, which they tell me is richly embellished with many rare manuscripts, coins, medals, and a variety of other curious articles, worth seeing.

We are impatient to go to the theatres; but I fear Madame St. Bruno will dread our becoming too fond of public amusements,—though she is all goodness! Her admonitions command obedience, by their gentleness and wisdom.

I have been so lost in my admiration of this charming place, that I had almost forgot to mention the pleasures of our journey hither. Our dear abbess has the most intelligent of minds; she explained every object worthy of remark, and nothing can equal the
scenes

scenes through which we passed! The prospects on the borders of the Rhine are wonderfully sublime! for frequently,

Where tow'ring cliffs, in awful splendour rise,
And midst the blue expanse, embrace the skies;
The wondering eye beholds the craggy height,
Ting'd with the glow of ev'ning's fading light;
Where the fierce cat'ract, swelling o'er its bound;
Bursts from its source, and dares the vale profound;
On ev'ry side the headlong torrents flow,
Scatt'ring their foam like silv'ry sands below.

I could write for ever upon such subjects; but you will smile to know, that I am going with Madame de Waldberg to a *bal masque*, at the Duchesse de Howenstein's; her house is the resort of the highest *ton*. I have a beautiful dress for the occasion; and Madame St. Bruno has presented me with a rich *bandeau* of pearls to fasten my hair, which I still suffer to flow negligently about my shoulders.

I hope to pass a delightful evening,
if

if the memory of my dear cousin does not interrupt my happiness. For him I would quit every gaudy scene, and retire from this busy world for ever; but, perhaps, by this time, he is married! all my prospects of this evening are vanished in the recollection; nothing but my evil genius would have inspired it at such a moment.

Our poor Claudine is much indisposed; she is far advanced in years, and I fear the long journey was too fatiguing for her to bear. I should grieve very much to lose her: she has always been like my nurse from my infancy, and what endears her to me, more than all, is her delicate regard for the memory of Lady Bertha.

Oh! let me not think of my dear shrine! All the pleasures of this animated scene cannot give my heart those refined sensations of tender melancholy,

choly, which it has so often experienced in that calm shade of holy meditation!

Adieu! Be assured that no change of situation can obliterate the memory of your friendship. I hope soon to hear that Mr. Courtney has had resolution to fix your giddy mind, and you evinced your good sense by rewarding his merit.

Most affectionately yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Calais, Dec. 179..

ALMOST within sight of my native home, where I shall perhaps receive the sentence that will decide my fate in this precarious world, my heart prompts me to remind you of its sufferings and its resolution.

I trust by this time you have received the hasty letter which I wrote from Lausanne ; and lest you should attribute its contents to the momentary effect of disappointment, or the caprice of a warm imagination checked by the absence of a beloved object, for whom its fondest hopes were cherished, I now dispassionately confirm all I then asserted ;

serted ; and if I could find language to strengthen my solemn asseverations, I would repeat them a thousand times.

A small instance of kindness on your part will make me the happiest of mortals. The few months of my life which I have passed in the society of your sex, gave me no flattering idea of their perfections ; but you have poured conviction into my heart ; I feel every vein confess your power, and every joy will hereafter depend on your humanity.

The death of my father, while I was yet an infant, and the unbending severity of my mother's temper, haughty, ungentle, and unkind, banished me from my family, and I scarcely ever experienced the sensations of filial affection.

My mother's hatred seemed to en-
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crease with my years ; and the influence she had obtained over the mind of my father, obliged him to leave me entirely in her power during her life.

The instant I was capable of reflection, I was placed under the care of a tutor ; from him I was transferred to Oxford ; and from thence ordered to make the tour of Italy.

Thus, an alien to a mother's heart, I never felt its tenderness. Reproof has ever been the subject of her pen, and repulsive coldness the characteristic of her epistles. She banished me without a tear, and taught me to deceive her, by making me the dupe of perpetual deception. Though my father's property was very considerable, her unfeeling mind has scarcely suffered her to allow me the necessaries of life ; while she has, from year to year,

year, dissipated my fortune, in every absurd and expensive pursuit.

I have often felt the force of her neglect, and considering myself as peculiarly wretched in not knowing the supreme delight, which maternal tenderness bestows even on the poorest offspring of poverty and labour.

Thus, impressed with an unfavourable opinion of the female mind, I leave you to judge what I felt when I first acknowledged your virtues, all perfect, all amiable—as you are! There was more solicitude in your look and manner, than I had ever before experienced. Is it astonishing that I was the slave of such new, such bewitching kindness?

I shall proceed to London without delay. The worst calamity that can befall me, is not equal to the torments

of suspense. I expect the resentment of Lord Litchfield—he may disinherit me, he may take from me every hope of affluence—but he shall not contaminate my mind, or render me unworthy of your esteem. My mother will not leave me a beggar; she will scarcely dissipate all my patrimony, and a very scanty pittance will suffice, if I am blessed with your affection. But why do I think of interested claims? Avarice and Laura must not be mentioned at the same moment.

I am impatient to embark; the weather is unfavourable; but my anxiety deadens every idea of danger. I will endeavour to obtain information respecting the time of the packet's departure.

* * * * *

I am

I am just returned from the Pier, the wind blows a perfect hurricane, the sea swells, high as the white cliffs that mark the shores of Britain. I have watched a distant vessel, borne on the roaring waves, one moment lifted to the clouds, the next, almost buried between the foaming billows that seemed to threaten instant destruction! If, for a moment, the wind was hushed, we distinctly heard the cries of the sufferers, hanging on the tattered shrouds!

My soul shuddered at the idea, that perhaps a father was doomed to sink amidst the howling tempest, and leave a fond wife, a numerous offspring, in poverty and anguish.

As I contemplated the warring elements, I thought with Zanga,

"Ye bear a just resemblance of my fortune,

"And suit the gloomy habit of my soul!"

M 3

Oh!

Oh! most adorable of Beings! what have you made me? You have softened my once cold, unfeeling breast, to the tenderness of a woman! For your sake I have betrayed a weakness of mind, which upon any other occasion, would have made me despise myself. I have wept! Yes, Laura, I have wept like an infant.

Thursday Noon.

Merciful heaven! how shall I describe the scene I have just witnessed?

The English vessel, which I had watched with so much anxiety—is lost! She foundered within half a league of Calais harbour. Four of her unfortunate crew, before she sunk, committed themselves to the rage of the furious waves, in a small boat, and, for a short time, seemed to weather out the storm.

But,

But, I have scarcely power to describe the fatal event, she overset, they struggled with the elements, and by wonderful exertions, reached a landmark which stands in the channel, about fifty yards from the Pier.

For several minutes they had remained in this dreadful situation, grasping their last resource, the waves every instant dashing over their heads! when five French sailors, prompted by humanity, embarked in a small fishing-boat to their assistance. In vain did the surrounding multitude expostulate,—in vain represent the certainty of death. They were deaf to the voice of reason, and inspired with the most sublime philanthropy, in a cause that will immortalize their names—they perished!

The objects who had excited their compassion, exhausted by fatigue, lost their

their hold, and, one by one, dropped
into Eternity ! *

* * * * *

Friday Morning, Eight o'Clock.

I am this instant going on board ; the
wind has fallen, and the day is serene.
Adieu, Laura, adieu, arbitress of my
fate ! dear star of perfection, by whose
superior lustre, I trust I shall be guid-
ed through this wilderness of sorrow.

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

* This anecdote is a fact. The circumstance hap-
pened a few years since, and the monument erected to
the memory of those brave fellows, now remains on
the Pier at Calais.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Vienna, Dec, 179-.

SUCH an event has taken place---such a discovery! You will scarcely give me credit, when I relate the circumstance. Alas! my dear Sophia, I did not believe that there existed a being, so deceitful as---her, whom I no longer call my friend.

I informed you in my last letter, that we were invited to a *bal masque*, at the Duchesse de Howenstein's. The Baroness de Waldberg was delighted with the idea of contributing to our amusement. We were no less anxious to partake of an entertainment, so new and splendid!

The

The house was magnificently illuminated ; the baroness wore the habit of a Venetian Bourgeoise ; Madame de Leitzberg, that of a Sicilian Paysanne ; Miss Warton, and myself, were dressed as Savoyards.

We had not been five minutes in the room, when a mask accosted us :

“ Well, my dainty,” said he, “ how long have you left your Popish habitation ? What have you done with old governess Brown ? When did you hear from Cousin Edward ? ”

I started at the name, and entreated the stranger to unmask.

“ Know a trick worth two on’t,” said he ; “ not to be taken in so neither, my little Smiler ; hav’nt travelled for nothing.”

Heaven’s,

“Heav’nes,” said Miss Warton, “what savage have we here? Pray let us go into another apartment, to avoid him; you see,” continued she, with a sneer of contempt, “how lightly your amiable cousin must have spoken of you to his countrymen, by this stranger’s familiar conversation! But I am not surprized; for he never was, in *my* opinion, that model of perfection which I believe *you* thought him. There is no doubt, that your ridiculous partiality for him has been the subject of amusement for all his revelling associates!”

I felt the force of the remark, and could scarcely refrain from tears.

“Let us go,” said I. The mask, perceiving my uneasiness, again accosted me. “Aye, aye, all dicky with Edward, had a knock down blow, tipped him the go-by, left him to old Panther,

Panther, half dead by this time, buried in the Pantheon."

"Dead!" said I, in the most evident alarm, "where, when, what killed him? Oh! tell me, I conjure you." I could scarcely articulate these questions.

"All a hum, know as well as I do, pair of blue eyes, dish'd, all to nothing, old jade knocked up, run out of the course, not worth a souse."

This collection of odd phrases, not one of which was understood by the company, drew a crowd about us. The mask continued.

"Some fun here, this is the go, who thought of seeing you at Madam Humdrum's, got a letter of credit, drew on old Light-bag for another thousand,
I am

I am the kick, all the tippy, nobody like me!"

My senses confessed his singularity, while I turned away with abhorrence at his ribaldry, but he proceeded with that dauntless confidence, which is always the associate of ignorance and folly.

"Don't flout, little one, mean no offence, mayhap you don't know my way, afraid of old Baroness Woolbag? Hey? likely enough, to scare a body, that's the truth on't! Quizzical old frump to be sure!——

The amiable baroness stood lost in wonder. "What does he mean?" said she. "I never heard such odd language before."

The Englishman resumed his vociferous clamour:

“ Don’t you like my language?—
give you another.”

He then approached Miss Warton, and putting his mouth close to her ear, as if to whisper, instantly began to yell, “ tally-ho,” to such a deafening degree, that, frightened by so unusual a noise, she shrieked, and falling on a sofa that stood near her, entirely lost her senses.

The mask, on perceiving the distress he had occasioned, made his escape, vaulting over a *piquet* table, which impeded his flight, and leaving a venerable Chanoine and his ancient partner on the floor, to recover from their amazement at leisure.

The whole company agreed in opinion, that this boisterous stranger was an Indian, disguised in the European habit; and concluded, that the dreadful

ful yell which he had made, was the war-whoop of his country. The dismay and consternation were undescribable.

Now, my friend, I come to the sequel of my story ; my trembling hand proves that the task is a painful one.

Miss Warton continued insensible ; I desired all the crowd to leave us, except the Duchesse de Howenstein, and Madame de Leitzberg. I began to unlace her corset, which fastened before, and which prevented her breathing freely, when—Oh ! heavens ! I beheld on her bosom the portrait I had lost ! the dear resemblance of my amiable cousin !

Treacherous Belinda ! My astonishment chained my tongue ; I complained of sudden indisposition, and requested leave to return home.

Madame de Leitzberg offered to accompany me—and I left Miss Warton to the care of the Baroness.

False! False Belinda!

“Thou and my bosom, henceforth shall be twain.”

Adieu,

Sincerely yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

SIR ROBERT LITTLEWORTH,
TO EDWARD PERCIVAL.

Vienna, Dec. 179-.

WELL MY HEARTY

OLD one levanted, dead heat, wrong
side the post, off in a tangent, sharpened
all the ready.

Lost all my Spanish, tired as a fox-
hound, cheated by a German Signora,
sprained Tartar's fetlock, clearing the
church door, high mass, dashed four
in hand, slap in the kennel, pavement,
striking fire, knocked down an abbe,
all in an uproar.

Went to mumm at old Madam
Humdrum's, run my rig upon 'em,
spied your cousin, sung 'em a tally-ho,

N 3

young

young one gave in, tipped us a faint,
time to be off, gave 'em a somerset,
upset old Stiffwig, took French leave.

Want to be moving, don't like their
ways, aint up to their tricks, can't
abide their living, hate boar's heads
and sour crout.

Great mind to fetch Nannette.

Went to my banker's, pretty wife,
wanted a chaste salute, got affronted,
looked like a ninny, soon rallied, boxed
old Lightbag, gave me my own, got
turned out.

That's all,

ROBERT LITTLEWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Dover, Sept. 1790.

I AM an extraordinary example of an Englishman, after ten months absence from his native country, returning to it with a reluctant heart! But is it strange, that the farther I travel from you, the nearer I approach to misery?

It has been remarked, that crossing the ocean is an excellent remedy for a despairing mind: Ah! Laura, but not a mind impressed with your image, with your virtues!

I do not expect any letters from you. I know the rigid propriety of Madame
St.

St. Bruno's sentiments. I know how much she has your interest at heart.— Yet suffer me to cherish the enchanting idea, that if you were wholly free--if no restraint attended your situation, you would honour me with a line of generous remembrance.

Indeed I deserve some little kindness ; and my opinion of your heart, teaches me to think, that you are not insensible to the attachment of one, who only estimates his share of happiness in proportion as it meets with your approbation.

What can I say ? Only demand a proof of my affection, and, however severe the injunction, I will hasten to obey you. There is little merit in such an offer, because, in proving myself worthy of you, I should gratify every wish of my heart.

I am

I am this instant setting out for London, and am anxious for an interview with Lord Litchfield. No power upon earth shall alter my sentiments.

Laura---my amiable cousin---let me once more solemnly avow to you, that no other woman shall ever share my affections. I never will marry, unless you will be my wife; and I shall not bear existence after that hope forsakes me.

Now, loveliest of women!--only for a short time---adieu.

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Vienna, Dec. 179-.
Monday.

THE dissimulation of Miss Warton is counteracted by the hourly and encreasing attention of my dear Madame St. Bruno, whose whole study seems to be that of endeavouring to amuse me. I pass much of my time with Madame de Leitzberg. She lives very splendidly; and having a just claim to the title of *bel-esprit*, her house is frequented by all the *litterati* of this country.

The Baroness de Waldberg is as kind to me as ever; but she is not quite so pleasant a companion as Madame de Leitzberg, because the latter
is

is only thirty years of age, and the former more than sixty.

You will perhaps be astonished at my seeming placidity of mind, and at the variety of pleasures in which I have borne a part, since my arrival at Vienna. You will think I have forgot Edward Percival. Alas! the hour in which I forget him, I shall cease to breathe.

I make all my confessions to you, with as much sincerity, and with equal confidence in your secrecy, as I ever did to *Pere Leonard*.]

Now attend. I often think that the mysterious story of Lady Granmore may interest me very nearly: Do you comprehend my meaning? The daughter is not yet discovered; and Madame St. Bruno's very extraordinary kindness; the valuable jewels she has lately presented

presented to me ; the care she has taken of my education ; the ignorance in which I am kept respecting my family connexions. The sympathetic sorrow which pervaded my bosom every time I visited the Shrine---all conspire to awaken hopes---perhaps delusive hopes, that I am nearly related to her.

Oh! my friend, the idea fills my heart with sensations undescribable---when I reflect that the daughter of Lord Granmore is the destined wife of Edward Percival,

I have received a letter from my cousin, enclosed to me by Terese de Bouvais. I will keep it as the most precious treasure. I will guard it as a relic. Such a letter, so full of affection---Yes, Sophia---affection, I dare tell you without a blush.

I will not read it again till I hear
from

from you. Pray let me know if Mr. Percival is arrived in England, and whether any discovery is yet made respecting Lady Granmore's daughter.— My hopes, nay, even my existence will, I fear, depend on the *eclaircissement* of this extraordinary affair. And I am firmly of opinion, that the few weeks from this time to the period that must terminate my anxiety, will appear much longer than all the years of my former seclusion.

Madame St. Bruno has engaged a very excellent master to teach me the German, a Monsieur de *****, a pleasant, well informed man, who is acquainted with all the modern languages.

It is a singular circumstance, that this gentleman should have been the tutor of Charlotte, so celebrated in the interesting, but dangerous story of the

unfortunate Werter, who did not, however, destroy himself on her account entirely, but, in some measure, owing to mortifications which he experienced from people of higher rank, but inferior minds! His soul was all sensibility—he loved Charlotte with enthusiasm. She was married to a worthy object; and Werter was too honourable a character to interrupt their felicity; but, as the man of feeling would never debase himself by undermining the repose of a beloved object, he had wholly suppressed the force of his affection. Other vexations afterwards awakened the irritability of his mind, and produced the fatal subject of his melancholy history.

Nothing could be more unfortunate than his death,—for the husband of the celebrated Charlotte—died not long after Werter's rash
exit;

exit ; and she is since married to a second !*

Miss Warton will shortly quit the protection of Madame St. Bruno, and return to England. I confess I shall not be very sorry when she departs ; for there is little pleasure in contemplating an ungrateful object. I could not help reproaching her for her treachery. She has restored to me the picture, and though constantly in the same society, we have never conversed since.

I shall not finish my packet till to-morrow.

* * * * *

Tuesday

* This anecdote may be relied on. The gentleman who related it was the Authoress's Language-Master, during her residence in Germany, and she gives it from his authority.

Tuesday Morning.

I have received another letter from Mr. Percival, dated from Calais. He is now in England. For heaven's sake, if you wish me not to lose my reason, write to me, and tell me all you can learn respecting his intended marriage.

I feel that my fate depends on the event. Be generous, be candid, do not deceive me. Suffer my heart to know the worst, while it has strength sufficient to bear it.

* * * * *

Tuesday Evening.

I have shewn both the letters to Madame St. Bruno. She was violently agitated at reading them. She embraced me tenderly ; her tears fell upon my face ; dear holy tears of virtue, and
of

friendship--that cheek shall never know the blush of shame, which has been bathed with drops so sacred, and so pure!

I am now more anxious than ever. My adorable Monitress still forbids me to write to Percival.

Our poor Claudine grows worse and worse every day.

Madame St. Bruno has hired a cottage for her, at a small distance from Vienna, where she has a physician and nurse to attend her. I constantly pass my mornings in her chamber, and sometimes think, by her manner, that she knows all the history of Lady Granmore. She often talks of the Shrine, and never without tears. But I love Madame St. Bruno too well to mention my suspicions to Claudine, or

to pry into the secrets of her family connexions with impertinent curiosity.

Adieu, my dear Sophia. How often do I wish to see you. The few weeks I passed in your society, while you were on your short visit at Geneva, attached me to you by bonds of friendship which never can be destroyed, except by death. For till that awful period I shall remain,

Toujours la meme,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Cottage, near Vienna, Dec. 1797.

ALL our pleasures, my dear Sophia, have been for some days interrupted by the illness of Claudine ; Madame St. Bruno is very much afflicted at her danger, and, independent of my own regard for the good old Nun, the sympathy I feel for our beloved abbess prevents my mingling in society.

Miss Warton leaves Vienna next week ; she has never forgiven me, because she has been guilty of an unfriendly action ; the artifice and meanness of her mind I pity, and I pardon ;
though

though we shall never speak to each other again.

I write this at the cottage of our poor Claudine, her confessor is now with her, and I seize this moment to say, I am, faithfully,

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,
TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Dec. 179-.

MY DEAR LAURA,

I AM charmed with the account you give me of Vienna, you will pardon me when I confess how much I was amused at your adventure with Sir Robert Littleworth ; yet do not flatter yourself that you are the only person destined to enjoy the supreme felicity of his society—He arrived in England last week, and was presented to us at Lord Litchfield's: Lady Cavil enraptured at the idea of a new acquaintance, has invited him to meet the Charleton party, at her house to-morrow. I only saw him for a moment,
and

and am already completely disgusted with his manner and appearance.

But Lady Cavil is so passionately fond of the gaudy parterre of Nobility, that even this miserable wild weed is more acceptable to her than the fairest flower sprung from a plebeian soil.

I have made every possible enquiry respecting the daughter of Lord Granmore, all I can learn is, that she was educated in a convent, and is now on her journey to England.

Her relationship to Lord Litchfield is very distant; the moment she arrives I will write to you, and let you know all the particulars: Mr. Percival has not been in society since his arrival, on account of his mother's death, though it is well known that she was a most unfeeling parent—her avarice denied him all the comforts of life, and her

her dissipation deprived him of what he had a right to expect at her death. I hope and trust that Lord Litchfield will act with more humanity.

Dearest Laura,

Your affectionate friend,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

THE HON. EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIMON GALLIARD.

London, Dec. 179-.

SIR,

THE melancholy intelligence of my mother's death was conveyed to me yesterday morning.

I have written to Mr. Courtney concerning the mournful ceremonies which yet remain to be fulfilled; you may depend on seeing me very shortly, for I shall, in the course of the ensuing month, visit Litchfield Abbey, where I expect to find that the most exact attention has been paid to every request of Mrs. Percival.

I shall

I shall send my solicitor in a few days to receive from you an account of my affairs, and to take charge of my remaining property.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER XXXI.

SOPHIA CLEVELAND,
TO LAURA FITZ-QWEN.

Grosvenor-Street, Dec. 179.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

As I think there is a great pleasure in knowing that others are as unfortunate as ourselves, I cannot forbear convincing you that the rudeness of Sir Robert Littleworth was not confined to you and Miss Warton only.

Do not triumph in the idea of having monopolized all the attentions of this most distinguished youth; but hear me with patience, and forbear to tremble when I declare, that no less than the divine Lady Cavil and the immortal Winterton are your rivals.

I believe

I believe I mentioned, in my last letter, that Lord and Lady Moreland, Miss Winterton, Sir Harvey Wentworth, Sir Francis Colville, and Courtney, were to dine with Lady Cavil, to meet the accomplished Sir Robert Littleworth.

Previous to his arrival, Sir Francis Colville informed Lady Cavil, that he was the richest Baronet in the Kingdom, and of the most ancient family; thus having insured a welcome reception with the fair hostess, he declared to Miss Winterton that he was the most polished disciple of Chesterfield that ever graced the zenith of fashion.

“I am happy to hear it,” replied Miss Winterton, “for the young men of the present day don’t know how to behave in company with women of decorous reputation, and constantly offend chaste

ears with their low indelicate conversation.

Lady Moreland suspecting some newly meditated plan, to annoy Miss Winterton, seriously asked me if I knew the Baronet; I answered; by hear-say only, and that report did not exactly correspond with the character Miss Winterton had received with so much pleasure.

At eight o'clock Sir Robert Littleworth arrived, though six was the hour of invitation: After making an awkward apology for coming so late, he walked once or twice round the table, as if searching for a place.

Miss Winterton simpering and bowing, offered him the chair next to herself; but, after leaning over her shoulder, and staring her out of countenance, he answered, "No, no, Ma'am;
if

if you please I'd rather, put up by one of your grand-daughters," then turning to Lady Moreland and myself, he continued, "come, come, my pretty ones, budge, budge, sharp set, come all the way from Hounslow—been to a fight, nicked the deep-ones, hedged for five hundred, knew the bye word, settled before hand, rode home in fifty minutes, tell you all about it, when I've picked a morsel."

At the conclusion of this most interesting intelligence he sat down, but being eager to return to his favorite topic, and I believe the only one on which he could discourse, he scarcely permitted himself time to eat.

The whole party were silent with astonishment, and Lady Cavil appeared particularly mortified at the idea of being rivalled in loquacity.

Having literally talked himself hoarse, he whispered Lady Moreland, "Pray, Ma'am, what is your grand-mamma's name?"

"I really don't comprehend who you mean, Sir," said she.

"No! why that elderly gentlewoman, over the way, to be sure," answered he.

"That Lady's name, Sir," returned Lady Moreland, "is Miss Winterton, but she is no grandmother of mine."

"Miss What?" said he in a half whisper, "Miss Winter-green, oh! I'm up to it;" then taking a glass of claret, continued in the most deafening tone of voice, "Miss Winter-green allow me to wish you a speedy renovation of spring."

Lucretia

Lucretia only answered him by a sneer of contempt.

Undaunted by the cold reception he received from Miss Winterton, he addressed Lady Cavil, saying,

“Come, my neat Dowager, will you drink with me?”

This appellation was not exactly calculated to insure a more favorable reply: I observed the gravity of the company increase in proportion as the Baronet manifested his talent for pleasantry.

Lady Moreland seemed, by a significant smile, to coincide with me in opinion.

“What are you snikering at, my little rantipole wags?” enquired Sir Robert,

Robert, addressing Lady Moreland and myself.

Miss Winterton now began to lose her temper, and turning fiercely to Lord Moreland, after bestowing a glance of the most ineffable contempt on Sir Robert Littleworth, "I wonder, my Lord," said our sententious spinster, "to see you suffer that hottentot to degrade your Lady by such opprobrious epithets."

"Harkee, Missey," cried Sir Robert, "don't you be scandalous—mind your hits—get yourself affronted, no business here, ought to be leading apes, lived too long in a wood to be scared by an owl, aint such a nizey."

At the conclusion of this oration, Miss Winterton's rage became ungovernable, her cheeks glowed with a crimson hue, which, added to the tremendous

mendous flashes of her grey green eyes, presented the most alarming appearance.

The undaunted Baronet proceeded :

“Come, come, don’t blush my pretty little Winter Cherry, you’ll see many a hard frost yet, though, if I may judge by the colour of your cheeks, you seem to be in full bloom now.”

Then turning to Lady Cavil, he continued:

“When did you hear from Spousy? Coming home soon? ain’t killed, hey? no such good luck? no mumming when old Hannibal comes back.”

I was astonished to observe the patience with which Lady Cavil endured his impertinent animadversions; but there are beings, who can be insolently
oppressive

oppressive to those whom they believe to be unacquainted with their follies, and as readily can degrade themselves to the lowest servility, where they find an antagonist who has spirit to detect their absurdities.

Lord Moreland, disgusted with the ignorance and familiarity of Sir Robert Littleworth, proposed a party at chess, with Sir Hervey Wentworth, which the venerable Baronet gladly accepted.

They rose to quit the room, Sir Robert, after following them to the door, on tip-toe, holding out the skirts of his coat, and imitating the limping gait of age, exclaimed, with a loud laugh---

“Egad, a rum old brace, a couple of choice bucks, look well in harness, like to drive ’em in a curricule.”

Lord

Lord Moreland, who had all the polished manners of the *vieille cour*, and who was wholly unacquainted with the modern system of education, turning round contemptuously answered—

“Young man, let me advise you to check the ribaldry of your licentious tongue, or you will very shortly be driven out of society,” then bowing to Lady Caviel, left the saloon.

Sir Robert seemed extremely mortified at the just but unexpected retort, and remained silent for a considerable time ; at length recovering his native effrontery, he exclaimed, with a distorted grin---

Queer old fish—don't want his advice, got six thousand a year---always be welcome, buy him out and out---stock of fleecy hosiery into the bargain.”

Miss

Miss Winterton rejoicing in the humiliation of her antagonist, could not conceal her triumph.

“ I think,” said she, “ my Lord Moreland’s reproof merits the highest commendation ; I am always delighted when I see these impertinent striplings reminded of their own insignificance.”

“ Hollo, my old hard winter,” interrupted the elegant Sir Robert, “ What’s your gab wagging about ? Who bid you put in your oar ?---Mind your goes---soon make you sing small, my old queer one.”

Then turning to Lady Cavil, he continued, “ Well, my dolly, seem quite dumb founded, clock down——”

Miss Winterton now losing all patience, interrupted his harangue by
ringing

ringing the bell, and ordering her chair. "Are you going?" said Lady Cavil. "Going," repeated Miss Winterton, "Yes, Madam ; a bear garden is, in my opinion, a more respectable place than this house, when you admit such visitors ; however, I shall never trouble it again." Then wrapping the shawl of dingy notoriety round her most cadaverous form, she quitted the room, without deigning to answer Lady Cavil's repeated invitations to remain.

Lady Moreland commiserating the sufferings of our hostess, who had laboured under the agony of constrained silence for more than two hours, proposed adjourning to the Opera ; Colville and Courtney joyfully seconding the idea, Sir Robert began to discover his unpopularity, and after assuring us that he intended to repeat his visits

very often, took his leave, to the extreme delight of every one present.

Thus ended the debut of this travelled hero, I wish I could add, to the satisfaction of all parties.

Lady Cavil was mortified, Miss Winterton enraged, and Lady Moreland, Colville, Courtney, and myself, wonderfully amused.

Now, my dear Laura, suffer me for one moment to be an egotist.

Courtney provokes me beyond my patience; the nearer I approach towards independence, the more reserved he is in his behaviour; in a fortnight my term of bondage expires, believe me I shall emancipate from the tyranny of Lady Cavil with more joy than ever a prisoner escaped from the shackles of the Bastile.

I cannot

I cannot account for the fixed aversion Lady Cavil has taken to Courtney, since the unfortunate adventure of the ghost, she has never heard his name mentioned without evincing the most sovereign contempt, and sometimes violence: But

“Heav’n has no rage, like love to hatred turn’d,
“Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorn’d.”

She is one of those irritable beings, who never forgive an instance of indifference in the volatile sex, and the “pang of despised love,” seems to prey upon her mind to this hour.

The singularity of Lady Cavil’s manner exposes her to eternal ridicule, those who are acquainted with her, behold her excentricities with commiseration, and those who are ignorant of her ruling passion for notoriety, imagine her to be only one degree removed from insanity.

Adieu, pray answer this short letter
very soon.

And believe me,

Affectionately yours,

SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

London, Dec. 179..

MRS Percival is no more—though she never evinced the affection of a parent towards me, I cannot but lament her loss—as a son ; nature frequently pleads more powerfully, even than reason itself.

I find that her expensive mode of living has wholly dissipated all the ready money left in her care ; and the estate, which was also entirely in her power, during her life, she has so heavily encumbered with mortgages, that I fear I never shall be in full possession of a clear rental. Lord Litch-

Q 3

field!

field has promised to inspect the state of my affairs, and, out of four thousand a year, to allow me twelve hundred, for a specified length of time, the remainder to accumulate for the redemption of incumbrances.

Thus, my dearest Laura, I candidly unfold the state of my finances, all I possess is yours ; I cannot exist unless you will participate my little fortune ; time may enable me to offer you one more worthy of your acceptance ; though never equal to your merit.

I shall now endeavour to bring Lord Litchfield to some conclusion respecting the alliance he has chosen for me, but which I shall most assuredly reject with firmness: I am not inclined to gratify the avarice of relations, by the entire sacrifice of every earthly happiness. I have ever, instinctively, resisted the tyranny of compulsion.

It

It mortified me exceedingly to find that Sir Robert Littleworth had visited Vienna—a calm observer would almost imagine, that some malignant star directed our exalted idiots, to display their absurdities in all quarters of the globe, in order to sully that fame which has established our superiority over all other nations. I trust, however, that he did not much annoy you: with an estate of six thousand a year, he contrives to be the most unpopular and discontented of mortals, perpetually roving from place to place, without finding a moment's satisfaction in any.

I am impatient to see Lord Litchfield, to know the very worst, and to tell him my irrevocable determination: Ah! dearest Laura, I have then but one step to take—to implore your commiseration, and to hope, that you will receive a wretched wanderer, solace his afflictions, and, by accepting
his

his hand, become the partner of his fate.

Farewell, my beloved friend, my amiable cousin, I never can change my sentiments till I resign my existence.

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

TO SOPHIA CLEVELAND.

Vienna, Jan. 1790.

WE are all in the deepest affliction.—
Poor Claudine is dead.

These three days past Madame St. Bruno and myself, have never left her. Miss Warton did not like to relinquish the pleasures of Vienna for so mournful a seclusion.

The amiable old Nun, last night, a short time previous to her decease, sent for a confessor, and, in the presence of Madame St. Bruno, begged leave to make her last solemn declaration, upon a subject that interests me more than I can express.

Madame

Madame St. Bruno, whose unaffected piety and benevolence exceed all the powers of description, requested me to accompany her to the apartment of the venerable woman. We joined her, for some time, in fervent devotions.

“ Claudine, my good sister,” said Madame St. Bruno, “ what can afflict a mind like yours, which, during a long life of seventy years, has uniformly evinced the most perfect sanctity—the most unexampled purity! “ Alas,” replied the almost exhausted sister, “ my mind is innocent of any crime that could disturb my soul’s repose; but there is a load that hangs heavily about my heart; I could not leave this world, and suffer you to remain in ignorance. The Lady Bertha.”

“ What of her, Claudine?” said Madame St. Bruno, eagerly—throwing herself upon her knees by the bedside, with

with her hands clasped, and her countenance expressive of the most earnest impatience.

“ You know she died,” continued Claudine, “ in the bloom of youth and beauty : the occasion of her death was”

“ Poison,” said our dear Abbess, in an agony of affliction ;—“ Why tell me of it ? I knew it at the time ; the rash action has since that period been a constant source of misery to me ; and I despair of her ever obtaining the forgiveness of heaven.”

“ Heaven was not offended,” said Claudine ; “ she was not guilty of the crime.”

I ran to Madame St. Bruno, who sunk upon the floor : in a few minutes she seemed to recover.

“ Go

“Go on,” said she, in a tremulous voice, “Angels seemed to whisper to my ears the blissful tidings.”

“She perished by the hands of *Ursuline de Preville*, our holy sister, who died about four years after the Lady Bertha.”

Madame St. Bruno was pale with horror. Claudine proceeded:

“The Lady Bertha you know, was dangerously ill; her health, as you must remember, hourly decayed, after she came to the convent of the Grey sisters; and her life was despaired of. Her physician had ordered her several drugs; amongst others, a phial of opium, to be administered in small quantities. *Ursuline* was her night-watch, and, by mistake, gave her the fatal draught. The Lady Bertha fell into a profound sleep, from which she never awoke again.”

Madame

Madame St. Bruno raised her eyes to heaven. For some time she continued speechless. At length, with a look of resignation mixed with sorrow, she exclaimed, " I thank thee, Omnipotent! for this act of benignity ; for this balsam to my wounded heart. Claudine proceeded.

" The dread of punishment restrained our ill-fated sister from revealing the dreadful secret. She told me, when dying, that it had broken her heart. She confessed all the circumstances to Pere Leonard and myself, solemnly enjoining us never to discover it ; but the peace of my poor soul will not be complete if I quit this world, and leave you in sorrow.

Madame St. Bruno rose, embraced the dying sister, and left the room. I remained with Claudine, who a few minutes after expired.

I flew to my dear Abbess; I found her at prayers in an adjoining chamber,—she wept a torrent of tears.

My heart was full of sorrow for poor Claudine's departure; but the bliss of knowing that Lady Granmore was innocent of self-slaughter, overpowered my grief, and soothed it into resignation.

Madame St. Bruno embraced me tenderly. "Oh! my Laura, my dear child," said she, "your shrine is yet holy. The instinctive spirit that fills the breast of innocence, like yours, prompted it to all the sympathy it discovered for my loved sister."—She could articulate no more, we mingled our tears, and, in all the luxury of sorrow, returned to Vienna, without uttering a syllable.

Poor Claudine will be laid this night
in

in the convent, of which Madame St. Bruno is appointed the superior.

Miss Warton leaves Vienna in a day or two. The gentleman who placed her in our convent, when an infant, arrived this morning, and she accompanies him to England immediately. She has never shed a tear to the memory of Claudine, or offered the smallest consolation to our beloved Abbess. She expresses a rooted abhorrence of my name, and has not even taken leave of me! Can the consoling spirit of celestial friendship, so soon evaporate?

Madame St. Bruno sees no person whatever for ten days to come. She confines herself to her cell, to pray for the soul of Claudine. I, even I, am not permitted to interrupt her devotions.

Adieu, I am too much distressed to say more than that I remain sincerely and affectionately

Yours,

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

*London, Jan. 179--.**Sunday Morning.*

MY hand trembles, dearest Laura, while I write, that the most interesting hour of my life, now approaches.

Lord Litchfield has appointed this day for the developement of my destiny. I know not why I should dread the event, I am decided in my own mind, and ought not to feel an unquiet moment.

Yet, oh! most adored of Beings, my heart, which knows no other sovereign, scarcely dares hope that you
R 3 will

will accept its devotions. Indeed, I will deserves your esteem ; I will, by a life of perfect affection, convince you, that my sincerity is as exemplary, as my passion is ardent. Neither time or change of fortune can alter the one, or in the smallest degree diminish the other.

If I find my uncle resolved to destroy my happiness, I will leave this kingdom for the remainder of his life ; I will fly to thee, dearest of women, and will never quit thy presence, till my fate is decided.

Explain my sentiments to Madame St. Bruno ; tell her, I have written to you ; shew her all my letters ; she has feeling ; she is not barbarous ; she will perhaps commiserate my situation, and suffer you to afford me some consolation.

Pray

Pray write to me. I am overwhelmed with despair, I cannot long support this state of misery ; Laura, I conjure you to write to me, only one line, one little word, to save me from distraction ; say but Hope, and I will be satisfied.

I have seen your lovely friend, Sophia Cleveland. We have talked of your perfections whole hours together ; and, do not be offended, she has given me some reason to think, you do not entirely hate me.

Lady Moreland, who is extremely amiable, and who has heard me expatiate on your worth, for indeed it is the constant theme of all my discourse, sets out for Germany in a few days. She has an heart formed for sympathy, she will tell you how much I am devoted to you.

The

The awful hour draws near. Laura,
only object of my soul's fervent adora-
tion,

Adieu!

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

London, Jan. 179..

How shall I describe my situation, where shall I find language to convey the intelligence, which my full heart throbs to communicate, at the same moment that it shudders to remember? Oh! Laura, you shall be mine, Fate shall not part us. The vital flame which animates my being, shall rather be extinguished. I will not keep you in suspense, though my agitation will scarcely let me proceed: If you believe me either honourable or faithful, be patient, be confident.

I met Lord Litchfield according to appointment. Heaven knows how much I dreaded to meet him. The approach

approach of certain death would have appeared less terrible. I found him in his library, writing; his table was strewn with papers and deeds of various descriptions. I looked upon them as the mandates of my destruction, for every parchment bore the name of Granmore.

He rose with formal solemnity to meet me: There was a chilling coldness in his mien and manner.

"Mr. Percival," said he, in the most awful, yet peremptory tone, "I trust you are prepared for the alliance, I am about to propose; you know that I have your interest at heart."

"I am prepared to hear you, my Lord," answered I, "but my acquiescence will depend on the merit of the object."

Lord

Lord Litchfield continued.

“The lady, whom I wish you to espouse, is the daughter of Lord Granmore; she is extremely rich, and highly accomplished; quite handsome enough, and too amiable to be refused.

“Very possibly, my Lord,” answered I; “her wealth will bring little attraction in my opinion, and, until I have seen her, I cannot judge of her mental or personal perfections.”

“Of the former,” replied Lord Litchfield, “there is no doubt; for the latter, you will, I trust, take my word. In short, I am decided, you must wed the lady I have chosen, or you will know me no longer as your friend.

“To lose your friendship, my Lord,” said I, “would be to me a very severe calamity;

calamity ; but would you wish the man you esteem to degrade himself by bartering his affections, for the paltry claims of wealth ? Is not the mind, the first of all treasures, in matrimonial alliances ?”

“ Very fine, very romantic,” replied Lord Litchfield, “ but extremely absurd. Give me leave to tell you, Mr. Percival, that I am not inclined to trifle, you are very young, Sir, and incapable of judging. I have chosen a wife suitable to your rank, and creditable to your family. If you cannot make up your mind to accept my proposal, I must teach mine to forget that I have a nephew.”

“ Yet hear me, my Lord,” said I, in an agony of despair ; let me only see the lady you have selected ; let me tell her that my heart is engaged to another ; she will not, upon such terms, accept
my

my hand. I cannot love her, then why should I, like a sordid villain, rob her of the means of forming a more fortunate alliance? If she is liberal, if she has feeling, she will shrink from such an union. Inform me where she dwells, I will hasten to her—I will at least be honest.”

Lord Litchfield sternly replied, “ You ought to have known the world well enough to feel, that marriages are only made for convenience; Love is the companion of fools, and the associate of poverty. People of rank look beyond such childish considerations, and seek for splendid alliances, for extensive connections, and the solid advantages of wealth. You are not obliged to love the woman you espouse; you are not forced to confine yourself to her society. Marriage is a mere form amongst the higher classes

of men ; traffic, only traffic, a lottery of blanks and prizes."

" And therefore most precarious," said I, impatiently. " My Lord, I cannot bear this system of degrading policy. I will neither sell my honour, or my feelings. This is oppression, I cannot tamely yield to bear it. If, for the last time, I am to bid you farewell, remember, my Lord, I am no villain, my mind is uncontaminated, and such as will not disgrace the title which I must inherit. My poverty will be my pride, when I reflect, that it is the offspring of my rectitude."

" 'Tis very well, Sir," said Lord Litchfield ; " then you reject my proposal. You refuse the hand of the lady I propose ?"

" I do, my Lord," said I, firmly ;
" reason,

“reason, honour, nature, and humanity, shrink from it. I will rather perish than destroy her happiness.”

I was preparing to depart ; he rose in great agitation, and after a moment's struggle between pride and avarice——

“Yet, stay Mr. Percival,” said he ; “be calm, and dispassionate ; see the woman I have chosen for you, she will very shortly be in England.”

“In England ! Is she on the Continent ?” said I.

“She was,” replied Lord Litchfield. “I am her guardian ; she lost her parents when an infant, and has by their desire been educated in a convent. She is unconscious of her rank and fortune ; for particular reasons she does

not even bear the name of her family."

I trembled with all the mingling sensations of fear and hope; he perceived my perturbation, and softening his tone continued——

"Do not suffer your apprehensions to overwhelm your reason; she is a lovely girl; you have seen her; you have not long since beheld her."

"Where, my Lord," answered I. "Oh! tell me quickly, I am all impatience."

"At Lausanne," replied Lord Litchfield.

I could not utter my sensations; I embraced him. At length recovering in a small degree, I had just power to say with a faltering voice——

"Oh!

“ Oh! my more than father, I have seen her, I adore her, I obey you, she shall be mine! Suffer me to leave you, I am overpowered, I cannot support my joy, to morrow I will be with you early, to settle all preliminaries.” I left the room, and flew to my lodgings, where I write this letter, in the full rapture of my heart!

“ Laura, amiable Laura, thou art then the daughter of Lord Granmore, and, in a few days, thou shalt be the wife of Percival.”

I have told the joyful tidings to your gentle friend Sophia. She has assured me that you will be mine.

“ Tell me, oh! tell me, Laura, that she has not deceived me.

Every blessing attend you.

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER XXXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Monday.

IN one short hour, dearest Laura, I shall seal my solemn pledge of love to thee for ever.

“My bosom’s lord sits lightly on its throne.”

Ages of sorrow are over paid by this rapturous moment. Oh! where shall I find words to tell thee what I feel? Thou canst not refuse the offering of my heart; dearest Laura, I have already received an earnest of thy generous affection, from the confession of Sophia. The impression her intelligence has made, inspires me with the tenderest gratitude, and she will henceforth be as dear to me as a sister.

I this

I this morning gave her hand to Courtney. She looked as lovely as an angel; I did not envy my friend his happiness, when I recollected how soon I should be the most blest of mortals.

I almost despair of this letter's meeting you at Vienna, for I trust that by this time you are on the borders of the Continent, journeying towards my promised world of happiness.

I shall desire Lord Litchfield's consent to meet you, and conduct you to your home.

Laura, am I not arrogant and confident? But this is no time for childish reserve. I have no doubt of your regard. Mrs. Courtney has given me the blissful assurance: and she cannot dissemble. Adieu; I am going immediately to my uncle. I write this at
Courtney's.

Courtney's. Such a scene of delight! He is the happiest of men; but he must soon yield that title to Edward Percival.

The crazy Cavil is talking louder than ever; Miss Winterton is not quite so gay; and, in my humble opinion, discovering strong symptoms of envy.

Colville is whispering soft nonsense to the lovely Lady Moreland—Courtney chattering with his wife faster than fifty magpies—Lady Cavil cajoling the well-bred Sir Hervey out of another summer invitation—and Miss Winterton sitting alone by the fire side, looking

“Woeful wan, like one forlorn,”

Grumbling most miserably, and declaring that “she thinks herself very ungenteelly treated.”

The

The whole party will set out tomorrow for the Priory, where Sir Hervey Wentworth insists upon their remaining a fortnight, in order to celebrate the marriage. Lord and Lady Moreland only stay there two days, on account of their immediate departure for the Continent.

Oh! my adored Laura, hasten to meet me; hasten to thy own.

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

MRS. COURTNEY,

TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN,

Jan. 1790.

THIS morning, my dearest Laura, I have obeyed your injunctions, and given my hand to my beloved Courtney, with all the awful ceremonies of our church; being in full possession of my fortune, my happiness is complete; not that I believe my generous Edward wanted the addition of twenty thousand pounds, to attach him to me; on the contrary, I was apprehensive that my wealth would diminish his affection; for since I came of age, he has never mentioned his expectations.

I forgive Lady Cavil for all the *ennui* her ridiculous behaviour has occasion-
ed

ed me ; for to her loquacity I am indebted for the termination of Courtney's timid addresses.

The other evening at her house, while I was sitting pensively silent, and Courtney musing at a most respectful distance, on a sudden she exclaimed——

“ Well, Sophia, when do you intend to marry this poor little woeful-looking parson ? For my part, I am quite tired of his sighing and ogling. What say you, Courtney ? ”

“ I dare not say any thing,” replied Henry, looking at me with the most earnest solicitude.

I remained silent.

“ I never saw such fools in all my life,” rejoined Lady Cavil---“ fix the day,

day, Henry, I'll answer for Sophia Cleveland---she will not be angry, I assure you, many a match is prevented by the ridiculous timidity of both parties; 'tis all your own fault, Courtney."

At these words Henry flew to me. I was not able to speak, my eyes were bent on the ground, and my cheek burning with blushes.

"Is it my fault, Sophia?" said Courtney, in the tenderest tone.

I could only answer, "Indeed, Courtney, it is not mine."

He clasped me to his heart. His joy was unbounded.

Percival is wild, literally frantic with transport. You are by this time acquainted with the cause of his delight. Pray don't be angry, but I have

have assured him of your affection.---
You are worthy of each other, and I
knew you would never have had cou-
rage to confess it.

Adieu, adieu, dearest Laura.

Yours, as ever,

SOPHIA COURTNEY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,
TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

London, Jan. 179-.

LAURA, I fear we shall meet no more on this side the grave. My misery is complete, and death alone can terminate my anguish.

My carriage is now waiting ; I fly to breathe before you the last sigh of agonizing sorrow.

Now hear my story, and then judge if there is a wretch so cursed as Edward Percival.

I informed you in my last hasty letter, that the hour to settle preliminaries for our marriage, was appointed. I went to Lord Litchfield ; he met me
with

with unusual smiles of pleasure and regard. "Now, my dear Edward," said he, "restrain your rapture, and in a few minutes I will present you to your charming bride. She arrived only half an hour since."

"Arrived! is she arrived?" cried I. "Oh! let me fly to her."

"Hold, hold, not so hasty, I will prepare her for your visit; she is timid, and those wild transports will alarm her. Rest here a moment, and I will conduct you to her."

He left me in the library, and in a few minutes returned.

"Now, Edward," said he, "permit me to introduce you."

I followed him to the drawing-room. My heart beat high with joy and expect-

tation. I seemed to tread on air : my agitation, my joy almost overwhelmed me.

On our entering the apartment, I beheld Belinda Warton!

“ Mr. Percival,” said Lord Litchfield, “ I beg leave to present you to the heiress of the late Lord Granmore, my lovely niece that will be shortly.”

“ Never, never, my Lord,” said I. I shrunk with horror ; my blood froze in every vein, I reeled towards the door, my head grew giddy, and I leant almost senseless against a pillar.

Lord Litchfield followed me. “ Boy,” said he, “ are you frantic ? Consider what you are doing ; Lady Belinda is astonished at your conduct.”

“ Name her not,” answered I ; “ I will

will suffer hell's worst torments, rather than marry her ; let her bestow her wealth on some more sordid object. I only wish to quit this scene of deception for ever."

He took me by the arm, and pressed me to return to the drawing-room.

"Come, come, Edward," said he, "I wish you to be wise. Be not the enemy of your own felicity."

I tore myself from him, hastened down stairs, and instantly quitted that detested mansion, into which I never will return. Oh, Laura! I am nearly distracted!

I shall probably be with you before this letter can reach Vienna. If you refuse to see me, I have but one step more—to eternity!

T 3

I fly

I fly to you, prepare to solace me, or to see me perish. Tell me not of patience ; I have long been patient, but my cheated senses break their icy fetters ; Madness will scatter them to all the blasts of heaven.

Laura, will you weep for me, when I am no more ? Will you remember my unalterable passion ? Will you bathe, with tears, the sod where I shall sleep for ever ? Indeed, I am almost deprived of reason ; yet the last impression my memory shall receive, shall be that of your image.

Adieu, adieu,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

SOPHIA COURTNEY,
TO LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

Dover, Sept. 179-

MY DEAR LAURA,

My heart throbs with anguish for your situation. Collect all your fortitude, and prepare to console the unhappy Percival. He is now on his journey to Vienna. We have just witnessed a scene which no language can describe. He left our party in the most delightful spirits; joy sat exulting in his animated eyes, and seemed to diffuse new grace over his countenance.

An hour had scarcely passed, when a servant abruptly entered the room,
and

and whispered to Courtney. "For God's sake, sir," said he, "come down stairs immediately, for I believe Mr. Percival is dying."

Courtney flew to the saloon, and I followed him with Sir Francis Colville.

Lady Cavil and Miss Winterton remained unmoved!

We found poor Percival the picture of despair. He was pale as death, trembling and agitated.

"Courtney, said he, "I am lost for ever. This fatal blow must end my being."

We were astonished, and unable to account for this extraordinary change! He then described the scene which had passed at Lord Litchfield's.

"I am

"I am setting out this instant for Vienna," said he. "I shall make short business of it. If Laura refuses me, I will not survive it."

Oh! my friend, do not hurry him to madness.

He instantly wrote you a letter, which you will receive with this, wherein he explained the fatal interview, which has almost driven him to despair.

Lord Litchfield came while he was writing. We thought it prudent not to let them meet; for, I assure you, Percival is desperate.

Lady Moreland leaves England to-morrow. She is acquainted with the whole affair, and will explain every circumstance more fully than I can by letter.

I conjure

I conjure you to receive your dear cousin with kindness and humanity.— Do not trifle with an existence so precious ; a mind so warm and animated, labouring under such severe afflictions, may be driven to frenzy ; one rash moment would imbitter all your days.— He deserves your affection—he is the most excellent and worthy of men, and, I fear, would not survive a decisive refusal.

I am so sincerely afflicted, that I can scarcely hold my pen. Farewell, my dearest friend : I shall be wretched till I hear from you.

SOPHIA COURTNEY.

LETTER XL.

LAURA FITZ-OWEN,
TO SOPHIA COURTNEY.

Vienna, Feb. 179-.

MADAME St. Bruno's seclusion, since the death of Claudine, prevented my making her acquainted with my cousin's two joyful letters. That which I have just received, must alone be remembered.

Alas; my friend, it deadens all my fond expectations of delight; but, 'tis the last shade of misery; I gaze upon it with a calm and stedfast eye, and consider it as a dark precipice, terminating a bright and luxurious prospect.

In

In eight days I shall be shut up, for ever, from a world of sorrow and duplicity. I am preparing to take the veil, and to devote the remainder of my life to piety and resignation. You will, perhaps, condemn my resolution; you will call it barbarous; reflect one moment, I conjure you, and confess its propriety.

I am an orphan, friendless, unknown, and poor. I have never tasted the pleasures of the world, therefore shall not lament their loss. Mr. Percival is nobly born, he is yet unacquainted with his own heart, his connexions are numerous; shall I call down the curses of his relations, and be treated with disdain, as a wretched intruder? Shall I plunge him into ruin? I, who love him most, be his destroyer! Sophia, it must not, it shall not be.

His

His days shall be tranquil, and unclouded with remorse, his family, and the world, demand him. In a few days I shall resign him for ever.

I will not bury such a gem in dark oblivion : I will not cloud his days with repentant sorrow.

I have informed Madame St. Bruno of my intention ; she is the most unprejudiced and enlightened of her sex ; she heard me with composure ; she begged me to reflect. I have followed her counsel ; I have reflected, and my resolution is irrevocable.

I shall not see Mr. Percival. I shall, before his arrival, become a member of that holy community, whose hopes are beyond the follies of this world. I shall be composed, and, I trust, happy.

Far removed from all the splendours
and luxuries of life, I have no wish
for either. I only hope for peace;
and if she will not deign to inhabit the
abode of virtue and humility, where
can I expect to find her?

O Peace! thou nymph of modest mien!
Where, where, dost thou delight to stray?
Dost thou o'er mountains bend thy way,
When ev'ning spreads its shade serene?
Or dost thou fly from scorching light,
To seek the tufted vale;
Or midst the solemn noon of night,
List to the love-lorn minstrel's tale?
Or in the Hermit's solitary cell,
In simple vestment clad, with holy silence dwell?

Fair, first-born, placid child of Jove!
An humble suppliant deign to hear;
If from thy starry-spangled sphere,
Thou stoop'st o'er mortal scenes to rove;
If ever to the lonely shed
Of agony and grief,
Thy slow and timid footsteps tread,
To bring the balm of sure relief;
Oh! quickly come, and through each aching vein
Thy sainted balsam pour, to lull my fev'rish brain.

To

The vain, the busy world I scorn ;
I seek no gaudy scenes of guile,
Where falshood courts with murd'rous smile,
And pleasure mocks the wretch forlorn :
To unillumin'd caves I'll fly,
Or climb the mountain's crest ;
And hid from ev'ry curious eye,
Steal softly to thy halcyon breast ;
Where soothing visions round my form shall move,
And one long tranquil dream my weary senses prove !

Already from my throbbing heart,
The killing shaft of anguish flies ;
Hope sparkles in my grateful eyes,
And reason blunts affliction's dart !
About my waist no myrtle weaves ;
No rose adorns my brow ;
Nor yet the poppy's numbing leaves ;
Nor yet the laurel's pompous bough ;
Then Peace ! thy healing olive let me own,
And let me steal thro' life---unenvied and unknown.

Adieu ! my dearest Sophia ! I rejoice
in your felicity, long years of bliss
attend you.

In five days I shall be twenty-one
years of age ; and, I know not why, but
Madame St. Bruno has earnestly re-

quested that I will not embrace my holy vows, till that period is past.

I am not dejected, I am not despairing : my mind is tranquil, and my soul is resigned.

When I ponder on the events of the last six months, I feel like the wretched inmate of a dungeon, who, starting from some fearful dream, blesses his dreary solitude for being one degree removed from despair. Adieu, much talked of world!---to me your sorrows, and your pleasures are unknown. The pure flame of religion will henceforth guide me to the path of resignation ; and, when a few mournful years are past, oblivion will efface for ever the name of

LAURA FITZ-OWEN.

P. S. I

P. S. I conjure you to recall the wandering Percival ; and let it be the study of your life, to teach him to forget me,---

LETTER XLI.

LADY MORELAND,
TO MRS. COURTNEY.

Vienna, Dec. 179-.

I WISH I could communicate pleasing intelligence; but, alas! my dear Sophia, the prospect here is replete with miseries.

Mr. Percival is almost in a state of despair—his manner is wild and varying—his looks are expressive of secret anguish—and his conversation evidently bordering on frenzy. He is no longer the delight of every society; his mien bears the mark of a disturbed imagination; and, unless some very speedy change takes place, I think the worst is to be apprehended.

I saw him only for a moment yesterday.

terday. He did not leave his chamber till the evening---he promised to sup with us---we waited till midnight---he did not arrive---our uneasiness increased. At day-break he returned---he had passed the whole night, which was very tempestuous, beneath the walls of the convent, which, in a few days will be the sepulchre of Laura Fitz-Owen.

I have sent to request an interview with Madame St. Bruno, and am determined to make her acquainted with the whole story : for if I remain silent, and any dreadful event should happen, I should never forgive myself, to the last hour of my existence.

I will see Miss Fitz-Owen, and from her will receive the sentence of Mr. Percival.

Adieu.

Adieu. I will write to you again,
when I return from the convent.

Your's ever,

MARIA MORELAND.

LETTER XLII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Vienna, Feb. 179-.

I HAVE this evening seen the angelic Laura! I did not think such a being inhabited this world! If the mournful impression which she has made upon my mind, will allow me the powers of description, I will give you an exact detail of our short interview.

Mr. Percival, who has not yet been permitted to see her, conjured me, in the most touching and energetic language, to conceal nothing from Madame St. Bruno. With this resolution I went to the convent, of which she is lately become the superior. She received me with a degree of gentleness

ness and benignity, which seemed inspired by something more than human!

“ Will you forgive me, madam, for this intrusion ?” said I.

“ Heaven forbid,” replied Madame St. Bruno, “ that I, who profess to be at peace with all the world, should refuse to pardon so trivial an offence.” Then, taking my hand, she led me to a seat. I never beheld so captivating a woman !

“ My dear Madam,” said I, “ will you permit me to see Miss Fitz-Owen? I will not detain her a moment.”

“ She is in her chamber,” said Madame St. Bruno, “ but she shall attend you instantly.” Having dispatched a messenger, she proceeded,

“ In a few days the amiable Laura will embrace, for ever, a life of seclusion.

sion. Yet do not imagine that her mind is warped by prejudice, or that any unfair influence has been exercised to bring about this solemn resolution: it is her own free choice; though, I confess, a sudden one; for, till within a very short period, she never even hinted such a wish. I fear some sorrow of the mind has fixed her determination, for of late she is not like her former self."

"Alas!" said I, "my dear Madam, you have developed the cause of her uneasiness. You have ever been her kindest, indeed, her only friend; and surely it would give you pain to see her wretched."

"Unquestionably," replied Madame St. Bruno. "Indeed there is no sacrifice I would not make to render her happy. Proceed Lady Moreland—I am anxious to hear you propose any
plan

plan that can promote her felicity."

I continued, "The wretched being, whose miseries touch her feeling heart, is now waiting to know his doom--- Mr. Percival."---

She started at the name, then bowing her head, gave me the signal to proceed. I obeyed.

"The monastic life," said I, "in which you have passed your days, has not deadened the fine sensations of your soul---you quit not the world, driven by the superstitious terror of a guilty or weak mind; you can pity, you can feel the miseries of love."

"I have felt them," said Madame St. Bruno, sighing deeply. I continued:

"This dreadful sacrifice, which Miss Fitz-Owen is about to make, will inevitably

vitably destroy one of the most deserving of men."

At this moment Laura entered the room.

Sophia, the pencil of the Rafaele could not paint so divine a figure! She was in mourning; a long white veil, thrown off her beautiful forehead, fell from the top of her head, in ample folds, quite to the ground; her auburn hair waved about her face and on her shoulders; her form was majesty itself, though every step was marked with graceful meekness!

She approached me with a serenity of countenance: such as Guido would have chosen for a Madona. Her face was pale, but so divinely placid, that I felt an awful admiration while I looked at her, which almost chained my tongue.

“Lady Moreland,” said she, “accept my thanks for this kind attention. You are come to take your leave of me; and I rejoice that my situation still allows me the honour of seeing you.”

She enquired for her “dear Sophia.”

“Miss Fitz-Owen,” said I, “will you allow me to deliver a message from Mr. Percival?”

She pressed my hand, and a tear stole down her beautiful face—like dew upon the drooping lily! She then took from her bosom the last letter which she had received from Mr. Percival.

“Read that paper, my dearest, best of friends,” said she to Madame St. Bruno, “and then judge whether I ought to hear the name of Mr. Percival.” She then embraced me, and, overwhelmed with distress, retired.

Madame

Madame St. Bruno read the letter. Her hand trembled, she changed colour, and, with some difficulty, said, "Lady Moreland, I will see Mr. Percival to-morrow at noon. This is a cruel business, and melts my heart to pity. I yet trust, his grief is not without some hope; and that it will be in my power to afford him consolation. I request that you will accompany him hither." I promised to obey her.

I have delivered the message to Mr. Percival, and we wait, with solemn expectation, for the interview.

Adieu, my dear Sophia,

Yours most truly,

MARIA MORELAND.

LETTER XLIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Vienna, Feb. 179--.

THIS day, at noon, we obeyed the summons of Madame St. Bruno. We found the charming Laura sitting with her. Her eyes encountered Percival's, and she seemed scarcely able to support herself.

He instantly threw himself at her feet, and resting his forehead on her hands, which he held together, he remained for some moments fixed as a statue.

Madame St. Bruno looked at me, and smiled, while a soft blush overspread her countenance.

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Percival,” said she, “ you came to hear my counsel ; you must not overstep the bounds of decorum.”

He started up ; his countenance was wild, pale, and distorted, his eyes hollow, and deeply sunk.

“ Madam,” replied he, “ I am the most forlorn of beings: you will, I trust, forgive me—I shall not long transgress ; perhaps this is my last offence, as such I may hope it will be pardoned—

The looks of Miss Fitz-Owen are not to be described: She rose to leave the Parloir ; her whole frame trembled, her eyes were full of tears—

Percival seized her hand. “ Whither are you going ? said he ; “ You shall not depart. Then, turning to the Abbess, he continued: Oh! suffer her stay—conjure her to be merciful---my

soul is on the wing—and if she quit me, must seek eternal horror.”

His voice, his manner, were terribly impressive: his eyes were fixed on Madame St. Bruno, his hand still grasped Miss Fitz Owen’s---

Madame St. Bruno then intreated that he would be composed, and attend to what she was about to say. We took our seats, and for a moment a solemn silence prevailed. The amiable Abbess then began:

“ I can feel,” said she, “ I can pity your misfortunes. Though born in Vienna, to all the prospects of luxurious splendour, I have, from my youth, been the solitary tenant of a monastery.” Here she paused a moment, as if to subdue a painful recollection. Again she proceeded---

“ My

“ My father, the Marquis St. Bruno, was illustrious by birth, but of a proud and avaricious mind. He had only two children, myself and the Lady Bertha. From our infancy he wished to deny us the pleasures of society,--- which induced the Baron de Waldberg, my mother’s brother, to give us frequent invitations to his hospitable mansion. There I first beheld the *Compte de Montmorency*: he was amiable, accomplished, and valiant; but he wanted the only advantage my father valued ;---he was not rich. I cannot enter into a minute detail of all our sorrows. He left Vienna in despair; he joined the army; he died in battle.

“ A short time after the dreadful news reached Vienna, an alliance was proposed to me: my heart shuddered at the thought; I dared not absolutely refuse to obey the Marquis; therefore requested six months to consider, and
reconcile

reconcile my mind to an event so awful, so perplexing, so little congenial to my feelings.

“ During that period, my sister Bertha, who was the fairest flower that ever adorned this country, at the house of our uncle, became acquainted with Arthur Lord Granmore: he was on his travels, attended only by his tutor; was distantly related to Lord Litchfield, and esteemed an ornament to his family!

“ His graceful person, and interesting conversation, entirely captivated the heart of Bertha. A mutual attachment was visible, and they seemed to breathe but for each other.

“ My father was a rigid catholic; fierce, haughty, and unfeeling: Lord Granmore was a protestant. The lovers despaired of obtaining the consent
of

of relations—and—were privately married. Owing to the treachery of a false friend, the union was disclosed to the Marquis, my father. His resentment was implacable,—he refused all terms of concession ; and my beloved sister was driven from his threshold with the most inhuman severity.

“ Lord Granmore was still under age, and wholly dependent on his father. The scanty allowance he received, during his travels, was scarcely sufficient to support a wife. But he adored Lady Granmore---and stung to the heart by the insult she had received, he persuaded her to quit the country, and fly to Switzerland.

“ The worthy Baron de Waldberg, whose heart was susceptible of the most refined benevolence, felt the tenderest concern for their unhappy situation ; and having repeatedly endeavoured,

voured, in vain, to sooth my father, promised, during his life, to allow her an independent income. I attend their flight ; and, for more than a year, participated their blissful retirement. My lovely sister now became a mother."

Here Mr. Percival raised his eyes to heaven in silent agony, at the recollection of Miss Warton.

Madame St. Bruno proceeded.—
" Lord Granmore was now of age, when the news arrived—that his father was no more. His return to England was absolutely necessary. My sister had only a few days before given birth to a daughter, and her precarious state of health precluded the possibility of travelling, without endangering her existence. Her grief was undescribable at the separation ; but her husband's interest demanded the sacrifice---and she yielded.

Lord

“ Lord Granmore departed: he embraced his beauteous wife, his infant daughter---for the last time. Shortly after a letter arrived, saying that he was the happiest of mortals, his fortune immense, and his friends, particularly Lord Litchfield, impatient for the arrival of Lady Granmore.

“ Just at this period my father, the Marquis St. Bruno, was appointed Imperial Ambassador to the Court of London. He had been but a few days in the British metropolis, when, in a mixed society, he met Lord Granmore. Looks of contempt, on both sides, provoked altercation: the Marquis was impetuous---and the cold disdain of the young Earl provoked him to outrage. He drew his sword---they were separated---but Lord Granmore felt his honour injured, and on the following day sent him a challenge.

“ They fought; Lord Granmore fell.”

“ The

“ The news was conveyed to us by Lord Litchfield. My sister was, for many weeks, deprived of reason ; when the frenzy of grief settled into profound melancholy, she resolved to bury herself for the remainder of her life in retirement.

“ Shortly afterwards Lord Litchfield came to Switzerland, in order to place a distant relation in a convent. My sister, with her infant daughter, and myself, resided in a small villa, near Geneva. Lord Litchfield commended her economy ; and informed her that Lord Granmore’s estate, so far from being ample had proved exceedingly incumbered ; that the whole of his property was scarcely sufficient to liquidate the debts incurred by his late father, who had always been more conspicuous for splendor, than for prudence ; had it been otherwise, my sister’s state of mind was not such as would
have

have derived any pleasure from the possession of wealth. The settled gloom of melancholy cannot be cheared by the tinsel lustre of worldly magnificence!

“ On the following year I took the vows of celibacy. My sister, and her infant, came to reside in the convent with me, as pensioners. I had scarcely taken the veil six months, when news arrived of my father’s death. He expired at enmity with my poor sister; but to me he bequeathed the whole of his fortune.

“ Lady Granmore, deeply afflicted with the remembrance of her father’s displeasure, hourly declined; this new instance of persecution was too severe for her exquisitely sensible mind; she was fading fast to that heaven which her faith and her virtues taught her to hope for: I need not relate the mourn-

ful circumstances of her death---you already know them.

“ She was buried in the ruins of a chapel belonging to an ancient convent, near that which we then inhabited; the body was deposited at midnight, without any holy ceremony.

“ Thus left to mourn her loss, I determined to rebuild our monastery. We removed, about six years since, to the vicinity of Geneva, while the fabric was completing. You, my dear Laura, remember these circumstances.

“ The lonely spot which concealed the remains of my dear Bertha, would never have been known, had you not discovered it. It was her particular desire that her daughter should remain under my care till she became of age; and that the story of her mother should, till then, be concealed from her. On
examining

examining her effects, in order to see if he had left any will, I found the gold casket, with its contents, as you discovered them. The manuscript was written by me."

Here Madame St. Bruno hesitated, and wept extremely.

Laura tremblingly enquired, "Whether the miniature which she had found was the portrait of Lady Bertha's husband?"

"It was the portrait of *your Father*, the late Lord Granmore!" said Madame St. Bruno.

Laura shrieked, and fell, to all appearance, dead.

Percival snatched her to his arms, and with the assistance of Madame St. Bruno, and myself, supported her.—She appeared to be wholly lifeless.

Our consternation was not to be described.

She recovered sufficiently to recollect the story. She fell on Edward's neck, and seemed to revive,

"Laura," said her amiable Mistress, "I have discharged my duty. This day, one and twenty years, you first beheld the light. You have my consent to wed Mr. Percival. You are formed to adorn the world; you shall have my unceasing prayers. Be grateful, and be happy."

"The request of Lady Granmore, that you should not know your origin, till you were of age, was probably on account of her invincible attachment to the catholic religion, and her apprehensions that you might be influenced by the Granmore family to change it. Her injunctions were strengthened when

when she heard of the embarrassed state of your late father's finances. And I thought the happiest life you could adopt, would be that of total seclusion from a world of sorrow. With this opinion, I only permitted you to use the name of Fitz-Owen; that of Lord Granmore's mother, who was the daughter and heiress of Sir Edmund Fitz-Owen, and who died at the same hour that she gave your father to the world."

I cannot proceed: the recollection of the scene seizes on all my faculties.

* * * * *

The remains of Lady Granmore, by order of Madame St. Bruno, will arrive at Vienna in a few days. The messenger was dispatched on the awful business, immediately after the death of Claudine, whose ashes are deposited

Y 3

near

near the spot in which those of Lady Granmore are to rest.

As soon as the solemn ceremonies are concluded, I trust I shall have the felicity of witnessing the marriage of Mr. Percival and the adorable Laura,

Adieu!

Very sincerely yours,

MARIA MORELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

EDWARD PERCIVAL,

TO SIR FRANCIS COLVILLE,

Vienna, March, 179-

THIS day has put a period to all my earthly misery, for blest with such a wife as Laura, I shall henceforth laugh at all the calamities of this world!

We remain only a few days at Vienna, and shall then proceed to England. If Lord Litchfield has courage to meet the woman he wished to injure, the only child of his best friend—the orphan whom he has endeavoured to defraud; I shall not, by screening his villany, become a confederate in his crimes.

The

The relics of Lady Granmore arrived here a few days since, and were, at the particular request of Madame St. Bruno, immediately deposited in the chapel of her convent. The ceremony was awful beyond description.— My beloved wife was placed in a very distressing situation, to become first acquainted with a mother, at the moment when she was consigned to the grave.

Lady Moreland sets out to-morrow for Italy. She only remained so long to witness my day of splendid delight!

Colville, you must experience all my agonies, before you can form an idea of my felicity.

Adieu,

EDWARD PERCIVAL.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

LADY MORELAND,

TO MRS. COURTNEY.

Vienna, March 1790.

YOur amiable friends are at last completely happy. They were married yesterday. The ceremony was performed at the good old Baron de Waldberg's, who presented the bride a splendid set of brilliants upon the occasion. The party assembled on the blissful morning, were the Duchesse de Howenstein, Madame St. Bruno, Monsieur and Madame de Leitzberg, the Baron and Baroness de Waldberg, Mr. Percival, and Lady Laura, Lord Moreland, and myself.

As you will feel the tenderest interest

est in the event, all the little circumstances will, perhaps, be acceptable.

On my arrival at the Baron's, I found the whole party waiting, except Lady Laura.

The apartment was superbly decorated, and hung round with festoons of roses. A small altar was erected, with a canopy of lilac silk over it.

Lady Laura entered the room, led by Madame St. Bruno; the effect was enchanting; the dress of an abbess, contrasted with that of the beautiful bride, was wonderfully striking.

Lady Laura wore a simple robe of the finest cambric; the sleeves were short, and fastened just above the elbow, with a row of pearls; her zone was formed of white roses, similar to the

the wreath which bound her luxuriant auburn hair! The blush of conscious delight, mingled with modest grace, heightened her beauty astonishingly.--- Percival was wild with rapture.

In the evening, the Baron gave a magnificent ball. There the bride appeared as the heiress of Lord Granmore! Her dress was made of silver-spotted muslin, and she wore a profusion of diamonds, some of which had belonged to her mother, and others, which had been that day presented to her by the Baron de Waldberg, and Madame St. Bruno.

Lady Laura has settled a comfortable independence on old Terese, and the honest Etienne. At her desire I write ; for she says she cannot express what her heart feels.

The joy here is universal ; and numberless

berless fetes are preparing to celebrate
the marriage.

Adieu !

Ever sincerely yours,

MARIA MORELAND.

LETTER

LETTER LXVI.

LADY LAURA PERCIVAL,

TO MADAME ST. BRUNO.

London, April, 179--.

A STRANGER, in a new world, to the beloved monitress of my early days, I now address myself.

Dearest and best of friends, accept a thousand grateful and affectionate remembrances. To you, I owe all my prospects of delight, to you, whose tender care has led me on to happiness, and rendered me worthy of the heart of Percival.

My life must be a scene of felicity ;
the mind your example has inspired,

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and

and your precepts cultivated, cannot err, and the reward of rectitude is bliss ---conscious bliss---beyond the caprices or the frowns of fortune. I shall, once in two years, pay you a visit ; Edward has promised to indulge me in this request ; for, if I had not such an hope to cherish, I should, though the wife of Percival, feel that my happiness was incomplete.

Believe me, my dear, my kind preceptress, all the gaudy scenes of life shall not make me unmindful of you. I will, in fancy, often visit your sacred habitation ; and the delightful enchantment shall teach me to believe, that Laura Percival is not forgotten in your prayers.

On our arrival, we found that Lord Litchfield was at Bath, dangerously ill ---Miss Warton was with him ; and that she was a great favourite. We set out

out for that place to-morrow. You shall hear from me constantly.

A thousand blessings, such as your virtues deserve, attend you.

Believe me, my dear madam, your grateful and affectionate niece,

LAURA PERCIVAL.

LETTER XLVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

*Bath, April 179--.**Wednesday Evening.*

WE have only been in Bath five minutes. Lord Litchfield is in extreme danger; he has refused to see Mr. Percival, who received a denial from the pen of Miss Warton! I give you an exact transcript of her note; it will amuse you excessively!--

‘*Lady Belinda Granmore* informs Mr.
‘Percival, that he cannot see Lord
‘Litchfield; and that she thinks his
‘intrusion extremely indelicate and
‘improper, at a moment so critical.

‘Mr. Percival has no right to expect
‘any indulgence from Lord Litchfield,
‘after

‘ after the stigma he has thrown on his
‘ family, by his disgraceful alliance:
‘ With regard to *Mrs. Percival*, a
‘ short time will elucidate her pretend-
‘ ed claims to the fortune of Lord
‘ Granmore. Lord Litchfield’s death
‘ will probably terminate that busi-
‘ ness. Lady Belinda requests that she
‘ may receive no further trouble, as
‘ she disclaims all intercourse with Mr.
‘ and *Mrs. Percival*.’

North Parade,
Wednesday Night.

I am informed that Miss Winterton
is the *gouvernante* of Miss Warton; and
that she is supposed to have a most
powerful influence over the mind of
her pupil. Mr. Percival has some
doubts, whether Lord Litchfield knows
of our arrival at Bath, and rather at-
tributes Miss Warton’s note to some
concerted plan, than to any wish of

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the

the Earl's. I shall not finish my letter till to-morrow.

* * * * *

Thursday Morning.

At day-break, a message arrived from Lord Litchfield, desiring that Edward and myself would instantly attend him. We obeyed the summons. A more melancholy scene I never witnessed.

He was just able to speak, though perfectly sensible; he knew me; and the instant I entered the room, beckoned me to approach him. His Solicitor was with him, I knelt by his bedside, he put his arms forth and embraced me: "Oh! child of my departed friend," said he, "I thank heaven I still live to do thee justice; thou art the Heiress of Arthur Lord Granmore,
and

and the wealthiest in the kingdom. Accept my blessing, and forget all that has passed. As you are the last descendant of your illustrious family, your existence was scarcely known; and, as I had been informed, that at the particular request of your deceased mother, you were destined to take the veil, I had conceived the unworthy idea of bestowing your wealth on *my daughter*, Belinda Warton. I shall leave her an independent fortune; but as she is wholly without connections here, I conjure you to countenance her, and to shield her mother from the severity of self-reproach."

"Depend upon my zeal and my tenderness," said I; "it shall be my pride to protect her, and my pleasure to amuse her; does her mother still live?"

"Her mother," said Lord Litchfield, "is Mrs. Lucretia Winterton."

- At

At this moment Miss Winterton suddenly vanished.

“Alas!” continued the Earl, “it would embitter my last moments, if I thought this secret would transpire.”

He appeared to be quite exhausted, and I quitted the room. His Solicitor and Mr. Percival remained with him.

* * * * *

*Pierpoint-street, Thursday Night,
Eleven o'Clock.*

At eight o'clock this evening, Lord Litchfield quitted this world. He became speechless a short time after I left him; but not before he had delivered to Edward, in the presence of his

his Solicitor, such deeds and papers, as put him in full possession of my father's estate, which I am told is one of the most beautiful in this country. It is greatly improved, and in complete repair. Lord Litchfield, as the guardian of Lord Granmore's daughter, made it his place of residence.

As soon as the last obsequies are performed, we depart for Sir Hervey Wentworth's, in Berkshire; from thence we shall proceed with a large party to Granmore Castle, in Gloucestershire. You may be assured I shall not go, without my dear Sophia and Mr. Courtney.

I am impatient to see that extraordinary character Lady Cavil, whose vulgarity, and perpetual affectation of *ton*, have induced the sarcastic Sir Francis Colville to christen her the Manchester fustian of second rate fashion.

fashion. I cannot believe such a being exists. My dear Edward objects to her society, fearing that her boisterous mirth will not assimilate with my sober monastic manners.

Mrs Winterton and her daughter set out for London, the instant Lord Litchfield expired. He has left an annuity of six hundred pounds to the former, and ten thousand pounds to the latter. The rest of his fortune and his title devolve on my beloved Edward.

Thus I see the termination of my sorrows.

Edward joins with me in affectionate wishes for your health and repose.

Believe

Believe me ever, with tenderness
and gratiude, my darling monitress
and most faithful friend,

Your affectionate niece,

LAURA LITCHFIELD.

FINIS.



